

SHE MADE WORLD CHAOS

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QUEEN VICTORIA'S JOHN BROWN
THE WANTON QUEEN

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CHICKEN



CROWN PRINCESS FREDERICK IN 1880

SHE MADE WORLD
CHAOS: The Intimate Story of
The Empress Frederick of Prussia

By
E. E. P. TISDALL



15386
D.36.

With 10 Illustrations



STANLEY PAUL & CO., LTD.
Paternoster House, London, E.C.4

Acc. No.	15386
Class No.	G.10.
Book No.	176

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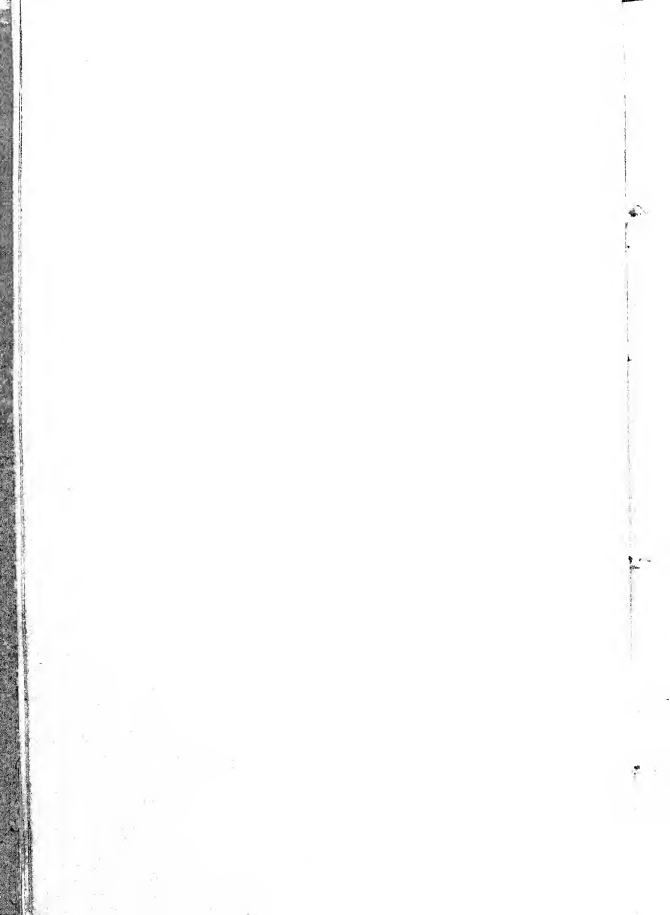
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PART ONE

AFTER MIDNIGHT

OVERHEAD the Friedrichshof Castle clock clanged the hour of one. The fire had died low and the chill of a February morning was creeping into the lamplit room. Deathly stillness reigned in the corridor outside. Sir Frederick Ponsonby, godson of the Dowager Empress Frederick of Prussia and Equerry to King Edward VII, was watching the door of his room attentively on that morning of 1901. He pulled out his watch. The castle clock was right. Nothing broke the stillness. He began to doze. Perhaps the Empress had named the wrong hour, perhaps a spasm of pain had distracted her mind, perhaps she had not been responsible at all for the extraordinary things she had said to him that afternoon.

One quiet rap on the door.

"Come in."

The heavy door swung slowly open. Two men entered carrying a small, tarpaulin-covered trunk bound with new cord. Two more men followed with another trunk similarly covered and corded. They laid the trunks down side by side. The men's heads were close-cropped, their faces wooden. They wore breeches and top-boots, obviously stablemen. It was the realization of that fact which fully brought home to the godson of Empress Frederick the significance—the dangerous significance—of the odd transaction in which he had consented to play a part for the sake of a dying woman. Stablemen had been summoned because they could have no idea of what they were doing, because the household staff could not be trusted. Without a word the men left the room and closed the door.

Sir Frederick took two labels. On one he wrote 'Glass With Care,' on the other, 'China With Care.' He attached one to each trunk. To him the whole thing had an air of unreality. It was hard to believe that the brief afternoon conversation with the Empress had really taken place, even with these trunks--the fruit of that conversation--at his feet.

They had called him to the Empress's apartments. He had found his stricken godmother propped in a chair, 'as if she had just been taken off the rack after undergoing torture.' She had roused herself, talking for a while about anything and everything with that intense volubility which took her listener's breath away. Then, after resting for a minute with closed eyes, she had told him the real reason for her summons.

"There is something I want you to do for me. I want you to take charge of my letters and take them with you back to England." The godson had declared his willingness, for he could hardly do anything else.

"I will send them to you at one o'clock to-morrow morning and I know I can rely on your discretion. I don't want a soul to know that they have been taken away, and certainly Willie (the Kaiser) must not have them--nor must he ever know you have got them."

The nurse had entered and the Empress had dismissed him.

Sir Frederick well understood why Empress Frederick wished to get her letters out of Germany. Undoubtedly, these were the letters she had written to Queen Victoria and her English relations during her years in Germany. Probably, she had asked for these to be collected in England and sent to her, so that she could prepare them for publication--hoping thereby to answer her bitter German enemies and vindicate herself before a world which rang with abuse and scandal about her. Now, she was too ill to go any further with her project. Doubtless, at some later time she would tell her godson what she wished done with her letters.

For the sake of his godmother Sir Frederick had taken upon himself no light task. He, the trusted Equerry of the

English King, who was visiting his German sister, had promised to smuggle out of Germany documents which the German Emperor would impound if he could lay his hands upon them, whilst the German Government, if it knew that a British State official was employed on such a transaction, would call it wellnigh a *casus belli*.

On the following day the Empress took a bad turn and so it was for the remainder of the stay at Friedrichshof. Sir Frederick was not again called to see his godmother; nor did he ever see her afterwards.

The corded trunks were carried through the hall of Friedrichshof within a yard of William II himself, who as usual was explaining his views at length, and the secret police gathered outside the porch barely glanced at the shiny, conspicuous trunks as they were hoisted on the military wagon with the other Royal luggage on the day of departure.

Thus it happened that the secret soul of Empress Frederick of Prussia—Vicky, Princess Royal of England—was wafted clandestinely out of Germany in corded tarpaulin labelled 'Glass' and 'China' and rested, in peace at last, for twenty-seven years among trunks and rubbish in the attics of Cell Farm, Old Windsor, her godson's private house.

During those eventful years Part Two of a titanic and horrible drama was played upon the world stage. Part Three of that drama is now in progress. Like Part Two, it is a grim tragedy. The drama must have a Fourth Part, perhaps many more Parts which have still to be played. Part One of this fantastic cycle, which has employed the civilized world as *dramatis personæ*, was a personal tragedy—the tragedy of Queen Victoria's eldest daughter and the Prince Consort's favourite daughter. It was a tragedy which befell a *square peg* in a *round hole*. In Part Two of the drama, which followed in natural course, humanity, gnawed with suspicion, jealousy, avarice, driven crazy with despair and blood lust, hurled itself into a *mêlée* of chaotic hopelessness.

The curtain rang down. Humanity set itself to prepare for Part Three.

This book is the story of Part One of the Cycle, a story which begins to unfold itself in the mellow tones of mid-Victorian romance, and topples suddenly into a stormy sea which rises to a hurricane.

Empress Frederick of Germany, in spite of herself and by her very existence in the position which Fate gave to her—by the unhappy chance that she, the most dynamic, forceful, impatient, brilliant woman of her time, was forced to mother a Royal heir scarred from birth in mind and body—was destined to leave to the world a terrible legacy. For that, as the impotent tool of chance, she is blameless. But how far is a human being responsible for creating, curbing, assessing, and guiding his or her own personality, for adjusting it to fit the minds of the human beings around it, for mastering it selflessly when too obviously it is at variance with its environment? That was where Queen Victoria's eldest daughter failed, and to that extent she played a responsible part in setting in train evil things.

As long as those letters of hers lay in the attics of Cell Farm, Old Windsor, people not only in Germany but in Britain, too, talked of her as little better than a vicious woman who by selfishness, personal ambition, and harshness to a crippled child she despised, raised two Monsters before the world. The Monster of an ill-used cripple, seared by inferiority complex, with a flaming desire to stamp on the necks of his mother's people—a maddened Emperor achieving almost divine powers over a servile people, who transmitted his hate to the nation he dominated. A second Monster in the form of a naturally bitter and harsh race filled with suspicion, cancerous envy, and fury at a foreign Crown Princess and Empress, who rated her adopted people lower than her countrymen and intrigued, so they believed, with her English mother to make Germany subservient to the interests of Britain.

It was in 1928 that Sir Frederick decided to give the letters of Empress Frederick to the world, and not until then was it possible to see her life in some perspective. Those letters show that at heart she was very different from the woman

whom hostile contemporaries saw or believed they saw ; yet in a sense these same letters demonstrate how she created in Germany those two terrible Monsters, which wreaked vengeance upon the world. In the letters the Empress betrays her real self with remarkable clarity and part of the result is corroboration of what her enemies and even her more discerning friends had said about her. The only difference is that the letters disclose a *good* woman, fiercely ambitious, not for herself, but to bring humanity, Teuton humanity, to higher things, a loving mother given to harsh courses to achieve a great goal, a high-minded woman, aware of her own brilliance and convinced of the invariable correctness of her own opinions, a passionately devoted wife pushing her husband often along wrong paths for his own good.

Unhappily, whatever her motives, the results were tragic. Ill-judgment, recklessness, lack of tact and of discernment were her undoing. It used to be said that in the days of glory of the Turkish Empire the women of the harem often ruled Turkey. Yet the inmates of the harem kept to the places allotted to them. In Constantinople a masterly wife ended in the Bosphorus. Only by the same methods of delicate subtlety, as were used by the women of the harem, could the eldest daughter of Queen Victoria have achieved influence among the rulers at Berlin. Had she been of a character to do this, the bloody cataract of twentieth-century history might have been averted.

It was five months after Sir Frederick Ponsonby had left Friedrichshof, toward the end of July 1901, when the end was very near for Empress Frederick, that one evening in the dusk she was roused by a hoarse cough which came from the grounds outside her window. It came from one of the estate workers passing below. The Empress smiled faintly. She said the sound had taken her back many years. She told a story of when she was three years old. They called her 'Pussy' in those days.

It was a cold, stormy night of 1844. The Royal Family were in residence at Windsor Castle. Something woke her up. Then she heard somebody coughing loudly and

frequently. It was a terrible grown-up cough, a man's cough, and it came from outside the window. She was sorry for the man with the cough out there in the storm because she knew that it was bad for a person to be out with a bad cough. She was not allowed to do that. She felt so unhappy about it that she could not go to sleep.

She called the attendant. She ordered the window to be opened. Then she scrambled out of bed, climbed on a chair held by the nurse, and peered out. Standing in the moonlight beneath the tower she saw a sentry of the Guards. He was coughing again. The castle terrace was no place for a man in his condition. "Poor soldier, he has a very bad cough," she said to the nurse. "He must not stay out there. He can come in here for the night. Soldier, soldier," she called, "you must come up here. I am the Princess Royal. I will make it all right if you leave the terrace."

The man did not know what to do. The child kept on insisting that he must come up to her room. He was an old soldier with children of his own and was almost tempted to obey because of the story he would be able to tell his friends. But at that moment the castle orderly officer appeared on his round. After answering the prescribed questions the Guardsman proceeded smartly on his beat. The Princess went back to bed, fell asleep, and forgot about the soldier with the cough.

But a few days later she was crossing the terrace after a walk with her mother and her brother Bertie when she heard the cough. She remembered. There was the soldier on duty again. She ran up to him. "How is your cough to-day, soldier?" she inquired. "I hope it's better." Then a thought struck her. She ran back to her mother and asked her to bend down. She whispered in her ear that she wanted something for the soldier's cough. The Queen gave her two golden guineas. She returned to the delighted sentry. "This is for your very bad cough, poor soldier," she said. The man took down his musket from the 'present,' touched his bearskin to the Queen, took the money, and then bent down and kissed the hand of the Princess.

When the Empress had finished her story, she sighed.

"1844 to 1901," she exclaimed. "It seems a great span. Perhaps not so great in Time as in History." She thought for a moment. "1844 to 1944 will be a century. I shall have been a long time at peace, but I fear many misfortunes may have befallen Europe before that day arrives. I don't think that either Germany or my son Willie will be blameless for whatever happens. Something has gone to Willie's *mind*."

PART TWO

VICKY—PRINCESS ROYAL

I

IN the middle of November 1840 the Press announced that Messrs. Seddon, upholsterers to Her Majesty the Queen, of Gray's Inn Road, had received from the Board of Green Cloth a distinguished order. They were instructed 'to design and make the cot and two baths for the expected scion of Her Majesty's illustrious house.' A day or two afterwards, a drawing was forwarded to the Palace, for the inspection of Her Majesty, who was graciously pleased to signify her approval of the design. The body of the cot is in the shape of that elegant marine shell, the Nautilus. The framework is of the choicest Spanish mahogany, and the bottom and sides padded and quilted in flutes, the whole of which inside and out is covered with green silk, embroidered with the white rose of England alternately with arabesques. The cot swings between pillars of mahogany, standing on plinths with richly carved and gilt brackets. The canopy is hung with gold and silver-coloured silk, the whole is gilt and surmounted with the Royal Crown. This rich and elegant cradle has been removed to Buckingham Palace. The baths are lined, one with silver, the other with marble."

London had been agog since November 13th, when the Queen and Prince Albert came up to Buckingham Palace from Windsor with the Court. Her Majesty had come to London for the Royal accouchement.

On the morning of the 21st the corridors of Buckingham Palace were the scene of intense bustle. The Ministers of

State were gathering. Her Majesty was in labour. In the apartment next to the Queen's bedroom chairs were provided for the Ministers, for Archbishop Howell of Canterbury, and for the Bishop of London. They did not make use of the chairs. The door into the Royal bedchamber remained half-open. Prince Albert, very pale, came out to greet them. He returned to his wife. The disconcerting noises continued in the next room. The men of State paced anxiously and unhappily round each other.

The whispering of the doctors next door suddenly grew hushed. A pause. Quick movements, heavy breathing, clinking of utensils. An infant's cry.

"Madam, it is an infant Princess!" The deep voice of Dr. Locock.

"Well, never mind. Next time it will be a Prince." The voice of Her Majesty. Thank God, she will come well out of the ordeal.

Somebody has pulled open the door. Prince Albert emerges. He beams and his eyes are wet. Before him he bears his naked, yowling daughter in a blanket.

Favourite Uncle Leopold of Belgium bursts into the Royal bedchamber with a flood of his customary banalities. After such a splendid beginning he hopes the Queen will have *d'une nombreuse famille*. It was a crudely chosen moment for such a sentiment.

"That is not my wish," sighed the tired Queen. "Child-birth means much hardship and inconvenience for us women."

The news sped round London that a Princess Royal had been born, but a grim rumour accompanied it. The heir to the Throne had been born blind. By the end of the day the whole of London knew of this awful calamity. Perhaps the Queen would never have another child. Perhaps she would die from complications after this ill-fated infant. In that case the foreigner, Prince Albert, would act as Regent until the heir came of age. But one day Britain would be ruled by a blind Queen. The evening papers were full of woe.

Prince Albert heard of the rumour about his daughter.

He thought it his duty to warn the Queen. Victoria took a quick decision. That night the first Court Circular was issued to the London newspaper offices. It informed London that the child was well and whole in every respect. The Court Circular has continued daily ever since.

The Royal nurseries were set in order. These were the rooms on the first floor of the north wing of the Palace, with windows looking over St. James's and the Green Park. Up to that time the Queen and Albert had breakfasted daily in one of them, and had spent much of their time alone in the other, that being Her Majesty's boudoir. They found a certain sentimental pleasure in making these the nurseries.

Crude caricatures, aimed at the baby Princess, splashed the Press. The public were disappointed that the child was not a boy, and their sentiments, as exemplified by the artists, were coarse if not a trifle ill-humoured. Melbourne, the elderly Prime Minister, whose fatherly intimacy with the Queen was so widely known, even to the extent of scandalous gossip, figured so prominently in most of the caricatures that he might almost have been the child's father.

One notable drawing showed Melbourne as a Mother Camp nurse handing the baby Princess to John Bull. "I hope the caudle is to your liking, Mr. Bull," simpers Melbourne. "It must be quite a treat for you have not had any for a long time." John Bull is a little offhand. "Well, to tell you the truth, Mr. Melbourne, I think the caudle the best of it, for I had hoped for a boy." Another caricature was labelled, 'Old Servants in New Characters.' Again Melbourne figured as a decrepit nurse. This time he was leading a little pony carriage bearing the Royal baby, while the long legs of Lord John Russell, the postillion, bestrode the tiny pony. There was, of course, a political flavour in these drawings, for Melbourne and his gang were regarded in a faintly sinister light as the Court camarilla.

From a contemporary pamphlet we learn that 'there was much indefinite rumour on the subject of suckling the Royal infant, and when it was remembered that the Queen had herself been nourished in the first few months by that

admirable model of a mother, the Duchess of Kent, it was hoped by many that the Princess could be similarly privileged. State duties and Court requirements, however, did not permit one in so exalted a position as Her Majesty to devote herself to this delightful task and, therefore, though deeply to Her Majesty's regret, a wet nurse was appointed. The lady chosen for this important office during the first three weeks was the wife of W. C. Lille, Esq., of Kew. May we suggest that many ladies evade their best and dearest maternal duties on frivolous pretences, but let none who thus act excuse themselves by the example of Royalty.'

The little Princess settled down to her first days of life with six nurses to attend her. Prince Albert was a very proud father and he gave one manifestation of this two days after the birth. Mr. Selwyn came as usual to the Palace to read English law with him. Eventually, the Prince appeared.

"I'm sorry. I can't read law to-day," he said. "Too many congratulations are coming in. I expect you would like to see the Princess. I'll fetch her."

He arrived with his daughter in his arms. "Next time we read law," he smiled, "it must be on the rights and duties of a Royal Princess!" He was about to take the Princess back to the nursery when he turned. "I suppose to you all children seem much alike," he remarked. "However, to my eye, this little Princess appears more beautiful than any other infant I have ever seen."

A month passed and the young Queen was seen about again. London learned that the Princess was now so heavy that Her Majesty was unable to hold her. They were beginning to call the child 'Pussy' at the Palace. The christening took place in Buckingham Palace conservatory on February 10th. At 6.30 p.m. the two Archbishops, two Bishops, and a dean ensured the solemnity of the occasion. Water was brought from Jordan. A special silver-gilt font in the shape of a water lily supporting a shell had been constructed.

The godparents were Uncle Leopold, Adelaide the Queen Dowager, the elderly Duke of Sussex, the Duchess of Kent, the Duchess of Gloucester, the Duke of Wellington, acting for Duke Ernest of Saxe-Coburg, Albert's brother, who could not be present.

The Princess crowed at the lights and uniforms with much satisfaction. "She behaved with great propriety, and like a Christian," according to her father. Melbourne, also, had his comment to make. "How she looked about her!" he exclaimed. "Quite conscious that the stir was all about herself! This is the time the character is formed!"

The Princess was removed, still in good humour, after close examination by the distinguished company. Led by the Royal pair the sponsors and the guests ascended to dinner, followed by enthusiastic toasts to the Princess Royal and a concert of instrumental music.

In May 'Pussy' was weaned and put on a diet of ass's milk, arrowroot, and chicken broth. From that day she took daily airings, propped on a cushion in a carriage and four in the Park. London wished to see the Royal child and people used to collect along the route. Pussy was a huge success. She answered back the starers with stern solemnity, which raised 'a universal grin in all faces.' After a few weeks of drives they used to say at the Palace that 'she will soon have seen every set of teeth in the kingdom.'

Meanwhile, terror broke loose at the Palace because of a shower of threatening letters against the life of the Princess Royal. That was the time of the industrial revolution, and England was in a bad way. Poverty and unemployment were rousing dangerous movements. Special sentries were posted on all doors and passages leading to the nursery. Whenever Pussy was in the nursery the doors were locked. Prince Albert always carried the master key about with him and slept with it under his pillow.

Just before the appearance of the Prince of Wales in November the Queen made an interesting entry in her diary.

She was spending the day in bed.

'Albert brought in dearest little Pussy in such a smart merino frock trimmed with blue, which mamma had given her, and a pretty cap, and placed her on my bed, seating himself next to her, and she was very dear and good. And as my precious invaluable Albert sat there, and our little love between us, I felt quite moved with happiness and gratitude to God.'

II

The Prince of Wales was born. Pussy was not pleased with her brother, but became more cordial when she discovered that she was still the most interesting member of the family. She attended her first official ceremony in January 1842. Brother Bertie was christened. It was a sober ceremony compared to her own christening, despite the fact that he was heir to the throne. The newspapers had taken to printing accounts of death from starvation alongside details of extravagant Court ceremonies. Prince Albert had decided that this must be a quiet year at Court. The gentlemen wore plain clothes and all the ladies, according to advice, wore Paisley shawls and plain morning dresses of English manufacture.

In April 1842 Sarah Lady Lyttleton, fifty-five years old, widow of the third Earl, was appointed governess-in-chief to the Princess Royal. She was to play a big part in Pussy's girlhood—it is to be feared a too-indulgent part. For, although she was obviously strict in her way, she failed to estimate the danger of too much precocity. In her letters she talks of the Princess as 'so innocent arch, so cunning simple,' and when remarkable traits of precocity began to develop she noted it down with amused satisfaction.

It was a great joke at Court that the Princess Royal was 'too absurdly like the Queen.' She had the same look of cool, penetrating composure about her. Lady Lyttleton was soon writing that, 'the dear Babekin is really going to be quite beautiful. Such large, smiling, soft blue eyes, quite a handsome nose and the prettiest mouth.' Pussy began to

call her 'Laddle' as soon as she could talk, and the convenient name persisted throughout life.

The Queen was always asking for Pussy, often at moments which seemed most unsuitable to her Ministers, and much State business was transacted while the Princess Royal crawled over Her Majesty and jerked the pen as she was signing. Nobody could resist Pussy, but all the same they thought she was over-petted and over-doctored, and she might begin to think herself too important later on if it was continued.

In November the Royal Family arrived at Walmer Castle to stay with the Duke of Wellington. The citizens of Walmer were soon deriving huge delight from gazing at the Royal infants as they were led up and down the beach in a miniature pony chaise, 'enjoying the sea breezes and the delightful weather,' as a social chronicler put it. The Iron Duke had the honour of entertaining the Princess Royal on her first birthday. Indeed, it was a grand occasion for all Walmer. A Royal salute crashed out from H.M.S. *Thunderer* and the other war vessels lying in the Downs. Bunting fluttered from the yards.

At 10 a.m. the Deal and Walmer band marched up to the Castle, heading a stream of men, women, and children in Sunday clothes. The band halted at the foot of the turret, where the Royal party stood with their host. The National Anthem rang out, followed by favourite airs. Twenty-six Deal fishing smacks, manned by fishermen in top hats, were brought up into the offing under the castle walls. The fishermen removed their headgear. An order rang through the squadron. With a flourish the vessels went about and made out swiftly for three miles. They turned, came rippling in again and lay-to in line beneath the Castle. The commodore of the fleet called for three hearty cheers.

Pussy regarded the performance with her large, serious eyes and bowed her head profusely. Her condescension to the crowd was much appreciated.

It so happened that Mrs. Hulke, the lady of Dr. W. Hulke of Deal, who by Royal command attended the children, gave

birth to a son on that day. Therefore, 'Dr. Hulke received the distinguished honour of a communication from the Queen through Dowager Lady Lyttleton, couched in the most gracious terms, desiring that the infant should be named after the Princess Royal, and that, Her Royal Highness's name being Victoria, the fortunate son of the Princess's medical attendant should be christened *Victor*.

'On Sunday morning Dr. Hulke paid his usual professional visit to the Princess Royal, when Her Royal Highness, in her most graceful and artless manner, presented him with an elegant gold pencil-case set with precious stones and containing medallion portraits of Her Majesty and Prince Albert. The Princess, addressing Dr. Hulke, said in infantile accents: "I have something to present to you, Dr. Hulke" (handing him the pencil-case); "I beg you will give this to Victor as a present from me."

Pussy began to show a determined spirit. Three months later she was in the boudoir at Windsor when the Queen was conferring with ladies and gentlemen of the Household. Pussy wanted to speak to her mother alone. She told the courtiers to leave the room. They were not listening. She caught hold of each one and individually dismissed him. One of the men smiled at her.

"I'm afraid we can't obey Your Royal Highness just now," he said.

"You must. I'm the Princess Royal!"

She was ignored.

"QUEEN! QUEEN!" she suddenly shouted, bursting into tears. "Make them obey the Princess Royal!"

Prince Albert was certainly justified in writing to Uncle Leopold when Pussy was three that, 'the eldest is quite a little personage.' She was a seven-days' wonder. He was at the same time able to report that she spoke English and French, besides German, 'with great fluency and choice of phrase.'

Pussy could not read or write. She learnt it all in her head. She used to be given verses of Lamartine to learn by heart. She proved conclusively one morning when she was being led

for an airing on her pony down an avenue in Windsor Park that she was not a parrot learner. She understood things. She was descending a slope and a wide vista opened ahead. She turned to Madame Charlier, her French governess.

"Madame, voilà le tableau qui se déroule à mes pieds!" she proclaimed.

As her mother remarked when she heard of it: "Is not this extraordinary for a child of three years!"

A not uncommon sight to courtiers at that time was to find Pussy and Bertie standing hand in hand solemnly gazing up at Prince Albert playing the Windsor organ, while the Queen sang. Pussy was solemn because she liked good music. Bertie was solemn because he was bored. Already his father had written him down as a dull, leaden kind of lad. Clearly, it was Pussy, not Bertie, who should have been heir to the Throne. Still, her father would have to make the best of it by securing her a really brilliant marriage. Pussy was the apple of his eye.

"The small people furnished a never-ending series of anecdotes," according to Miss Tytler, one of the governesses. "Now it was the little Princess, a quaint, tiny figure in dark blue velvet and white shoes and yellow kid gloves, showing off the new frocks she had got as a Christmas-box from her grandmamma, and bidding Miss Liddell put one on. Now it was the Queen offending the dignity of her daughter by calling her 'Missy' and being told in indignant tones, 'I am not Missy, I'm the Princess Royal!' Or it was Lady Lyttleton, who was warned off by the dismissal in French from the morsel of Royalty: 'N'approchez pas moi, moi ne veut pas vous!'"

'Laddle' was beginning to have a good deal of trouble with the Princess Royal. Her father was treating her as a grown-up person.

One afternoon at Windsor, after an hour of fierce discipline, Pussy was brought to heel, or so Lady Lyttleton flattered herself.

The nursery grew quiet. Pussy went and sat in her small gilded chair.

"Laddle!" she said. "I'm very sorry." A pause, while the governess-in-chief smiled benevolently. "But, you can mark my words, Laddle, I shall be just as naughty next time."

But there was not much really bad in her disposition. When Bertie was tossed off his pony and dragged by the stirrup in Windsor Park, it was impossible to comfort her long after her brother was found to be unhurt.

Pussy was religiously minded. Some alterations had been made in the nursery passage. A workman had left a long nail sticking out of some boards. The Princess just missed treading on it in velvet boots. Laddle took the opportunity to point out that it was by the will of God that Pussy had not spiked herself. The Princess required no thought to meet this situation. The procedure was obvious.

"Shall we kneel down?" she invited Laddle reverently.

The Royal Family was growing. Alice was born in 1843 and Alfred, Duke of Edinburgh, followed in the next year. Pussy and Bertie went north with their parents to stay with the Duke of Atholl at Blair Atholl in 1844. The wild Highland welcome with bonfires, skirling pipies, flaming torches, and prancing whiskified retainers filled the Royal Family with ecstacy, with the exception of Bertie who was disappointingly bored. Pussy, however, was a constant delight to Prince Albert in all she did. Pussy was seen riding out daily with her father and mother on a small Shetland pony.

"Pussy's cheeks are on the point of bursting, they have grown so plump," Albert confided to a friend. "She is learning Gaelic, but makes wild work of the names of the mountains."

It was evident that the Queen at this time was very well satisfied with her nursery arrangements. She had abandoned the idea that *une nombreuse famille* was a nuisance. She was now writing to Dearest Uncle Leopold that 'she ventured to say that not only is *no Royal Ménage* to be found equal to *ours*, but *no other Ménage* is to be compared to *ours*.' She added as an afterthought that there was no father to be compared to her 'dearest Angel.'

Thanks in part to the attentions of the 'dearest Angel,' Pussy, at the age of five, was reaching a state of pensive intellectuality. She liked poetry but preferred obscure poets. One day she brought from the Windsor library some poems by an ancient poet called *Wace*. "These are worth our perusal," she assured Laddie.

"I've never heard of *Wace*," remarked Lady Lyttleton.

"Oh, yes, I daresay you did, only you have forgotten it. Réfléchissez! Go back to your *younghness* and you will soon remember."

There is a striking glimpse of the Royal Family at Osborne in 1847 on the celebration of the third birthday of Prince Alfred. Princess Helena had come among them in the previous year, but she was not present at this festival: 'A birthday fête was given in August in honour of Prince Alfred. The scene was most joyful. All the servants at Osborne, with their wives and families, were liberally feasted. Three hundred persons sat down to roast beef and plum pudding. The sports of the evening were dancing, cricket, quoits, whipping a ball out of a hole by six persons hooded, wheeling barrows blindfold, snapping at gingerbread with tied hands, dipping for a piece of money hid in meal, and climbing greased poles. The Princess Royal heartily enjoyed the merriment and was present during most of the festival with the Royal Family. The princely boys—her brothers—were clad for the occasion in the costume of British seamen. The Grand Duke Constantine of Russia and the reigning Duke of Nassau were present with the Queen and Prince Albert, and all the ladies and gentlemen of the Household were highly amused.'

Osborne was the Royal home most beloved by the children. In the gardens the Queen had built the Swiss Cottage for their benefit. This was a perfect little two-story brown Swiss chalet with deep overhanging eaves and big stones holding down the roof. It could only be entered by the upper story which was surrounded by a balcony and reached by a wooden outside staircase. Here was the children's private domain.

The lower story was fitted out as a kitchen for the girls. They made real pies, tarts and pastries, and butter and cheese in the miniature dairy. Sometimes they ate this food themselves, occasionally they honoured their parents with an invitation to come and try it, but more often they sent it to the deserving poor of the district who usually preserved the gifts as souvenirs. The boys used the upper floor of the Swiss Cottage for carpentry and as a museum. Prince Albert often spent several hours a day with them up there. He was an expert carpenter and mechanic and also succeeded in turning out some of the best Swiss Cottage pastries.

In front of Swiss Cottage each child owned a strip of garden and an under-gardener saw to it that they looked after these properly. A time was to come when nine strips of garden ran side by side before Swiss Cottage, but at present there were only four, for Helena was too young to own one. Behind Swiss Cottage were the children's vegetable gardens, marrow frames, and conservatories. When one of the family produced a good crop of anything the under-gardener gave him or her a certificate which was handed to their father. He bought the produce at market price. The model forts with real brass firing cannon constructed by Prince Albert and his sons, which one day were to provide amusement for Pussy's own son *Willy*, were as yet only foundations.

It is evident from contemporary references that the Family were much seen by the public at Windsor that winter. They daily crossed Home Park, Windsor, on their ponies or in their pony phaetons, attended by their grooms. They walked up and down the terrace with Her Majesty and Prince Albert and people used to collect to watch them.

Early in 1848 Pussy and her sister Alice figured in an amusing episode at Buckingham Palace. Pussy had walked out of the nursery after some hot words with Laddle. She was in angry and mischievous mood. She met Alice in a corridor and they set out to explore rooms of the Palace where they were usually not welcome. In one of the rooms they found a servant whom they knew polishing the grate.

"We'll help you," announced the Princess Royal. The

girl did not like to refuse the offer. She did not catch the whisper which passed between the two Royal ladies nor comprehend the grins on their faces. The Princesses took the blacking brushes and set to with a will.

Unexpectedly, they ceased work on the grate and applied the blacking brushes to the servant's face and clothes. She was in a frightful mess from head to feet. The Princesses ran away.

The room adjoined Prince Albert's apartments and, before the girl had time to slip away and wash her face, she heard him enter them and go to his desk. She was petrified at having to pass before the Prince in this state, but there was no way of reaching her quarters except through his rooms. At last, she summoned up her courage, collected her brushes, and marched boldly past the Prince. His Royal Highness was astounded.

He did not waste much time in making the maid tell him what had happened. He hurried off to the Queen. A few minutes later the Queen was to be seen crossing the courtyard to the servants' quarters, holding a daughter by each hand. The girl was called for. She arrived with a curtsy and clean face. Her Majesty regarded Pussy sternly. Pussy asked the girl's pardon. Her Majesty transferred her gaze to Alice. Alice repeated her sister's apology. The affair was not yet over. An order had gone to the Royal Mews for a carriage. The Princesses drove out of the Palace to the shops. They had got to buy her a new dress, cap, and apron out of their pocket money. It is on record that the girls thoroughly enjoyed the whole episode and thought their money well spent!

III

Pussy now began to be called 'Vicky' by her father. In some ways she was maturing. There is no other word for it. She was seven years old, and Lady Lyttleton has an astonishing remark to make about a child of her age. She 'might pass, if not seen but only overheard,' says her governess,

'for a young lady of *seventeen* in whichever of her three languages she chooses to entertain the company.'

Some interesting news items about the Royal children come from Balmoral in 1848. We learn that one Monday evening of September the Royal brothers and sisters were to be seen distributing fruits among the children of the neighbourhood and 'entering into their sports with all the happy spirit of their infant years.' On September 30th 'they walked out with their attendants, passing through the village of Craithie Bridge and distributing small cakes to all the children that they encountered by the wayside.'

Vicky rambled with her brothers and sisters about the dark lochs, the rugged hills, and the ghostly glens full of shadow, where only waterfalls break the silence. She was known in the cottages at Craithie. When her mother set out to present red flannel petticoats to the old ladies, Vicky carried the parcels. She was sometimes found in these humble surroundings without her guardians, a fact which the journals did not miss, as the following extract bears witness. 'Some of our readers may be surprised, while sage faces will relax into a genial smile on being told that a Princess of Royal blood has, in this nineteenth century, donned the housewife's apron and, in childish glee, tried her hand at stirring the "parritch pot"—Scotia's "hamely" food.'

One young cottage wife of Craithie was an especial friend of the Princess Royal. She had a baby in which Vicky had shown considerable interest for some time before it was born. The parents promised Vicky that she should be godmother. Vicky talked of no other subject for days. The morning of the *Kirstening* arrived. Members of the family assembled in the kitchen. His Presbyterian reverence entered at the appointed hour. Only the Royal godmother was absent. Half an hour passed. His reverence had been frowning for some time. He suggested that Her Royal Highness was evidently unable to attend. Awed by the impatient minister, all agreed that the *Kirstening* must now take place.

The ceremony came to an end. The minister returned the child to its mother and bid 'Good day' to the guests. The

door burst open. In rushed the Princess Royal, alone, flushed and gasping after hard running. The Minister bowed and made for the door. No words of explanation were necessary.

"Oh, *please*, couldn't you do it over again?" pleaded the Princess Royal.

Of all the Balmoral memories the one which remained strongest with Vicky through life was of the day they built the cairn on Craig Cowan. It happened a few years after the foregoing events when the Royal Family had still further grown. The ceremony was to celebrate the new Balmoral, designed by Prince Albert, the old castle having been found exceedingly cramped and uncomfortable.

When on that famous day in Balmoral history the Royal Family, with the Minister and ladies and gentlemen in attendance, reached the top of the great hill, all their servants and tenants were collected to greet them with bagpipes, bared heads and curtseys. Her Majesty laid the first stone of the cairn and the patriotic fervour of several tipsy shepherds was sternly throttled as the Queen enacted her part. Prince Albert placed the second stone. Each of his children followed him in descending age. Then came the ladies and gentlemen. The pipers were now hard at work, enabling exhilarated spectators to break into impromptu reels. After the Household anybody was welcome to contribute a stone. In an hour all agreed that the cairn was high enough. Prince Albert scrambled to the top and set the final stone. The cheering subsided and the friendly procession wound its way down the heathery sides of Craig Cowan. 'A touching sight; I felt almost inclined to cry,' was the verdict of Vicky's emotional mother.

At the end of October 1849 Vicky and Bertie were unexpectedly called upon to fulfil their first public engagement. Vicky was nine and Bertie eight. Mamina had the chicken pox. She had agreed to open the new Coal Exchange in the City. Albert, who was to deputise for her, decided to take the two eldest children. The news in London aroused enormous interest. The Prince carefully lectured his children

—especially Bertie—in the nursery before they set out. It is on record that the Princess Royal was dressed for the occasion in 'a pink quilted satin bonnet with a small feather of the same colour at the side, a black velvet mantle drawn in at the waist, a green silk frock with white stripes and three flounces and pale drab boots.'

At noon three State carriages left Buckingham Palace. In the first sat Prince Albert with Vicky and Bertie beside him and, facing them, the Earl Marshal and the Master of the Horse. At 12.30 p.m. they descended at Whitehall Stairs. The Queen's shallop, or Royal Barge, a gilded antique, lay at the wharfside manned by twenty-seven Royal watermen, commanded by Lord Adolphus Fitzclarence. The dressed Admiralty shallops, the Lord Mayor's State Barge, and the Barges of the Livery Companies stood out in the fairway. It was a gilded spectacle of almost medieval gaudiness and splendour, unprecedented even in those days. More than half a million Londoners with banners and flags jostled on the river bank, in the narrow streets leading down to it and on the bridges. The dazzling water processions glided slowly down to Customs House quay.

The bewigged City Recorder, a big, loud, awesome man, bellowed his Address. It was noticed that at this 'Her Royal Highness seemed somewhat abashed'; her brother was 'struck and awed' by his manner. When the Recorder glared directly at him and roared: "Your Royal Highness, the pledge and promise of a long reign of Kings," the small boy almost started backwards.

"Bow to him!" hissed Vicky in his ear.

"Poor Princey did not seem to guess at all what he meant," remarked Laddle who stood behind.

Prince Albert was now frowning at Bertie. At the first trial his opinions were being confirmed. But Vicky was bearing the deafening cheering which assailed them on every side with admirable composure.

The procession reached the Coal Exchange. The Committee greeted the Prince and his children. According to Lady Lyttleton the senior Committeeman was so touched at the

sight of the Royal brother and sister that he quietly wept. The children were not to attend the grand luncheon. A plain meal was ready for them in a private room, guarded by two policemen. Vicky took Bertie's hand and they were led away from their father, both with scared faces.

At the end of the grand *déjeuner* the children appeared in the hall, amid a great salvo of clapping and stamping feet. Once again the Committeeman had to brush his cheeks. It was a stern ordeal for both children. Vicky took the initiative and brought Bertie to her father. Taking his children's hands, Prince Albert led them forward to the middle of the hall. Vicky curtsied again and again; Bertie forgot to bow.

By three o'clock it was over. As they passed out, Prince Albert was heard to say rather sternly to his children: "Remember, you have to thank the Lord Mayor for one of the Happiest Days of your Lives." To this Vicky agreed, but Bertie seemed bewildered.

Apparently, the behaviour of Vicky must have been very wayward during 1848 for in this year 1849 Lady Lytton suddenly became most enthusiastic about her. She went about telling her friends of 'the blessed improvement in the Princess Royal. She may turn out a most distinguished character.'

That summer Liddle noted down that 'the Princess Royal was standing by me, to-day, as I was trying a few chords on the pianoforte. She was pleased and pensive like her old self. "I like chords, one can *read* them," she exclaimed. "They make one sometimes gay, sometimes sad. It used to be too much for me to like formerly."'

Prince Albert, that wisest of men in most spheres of activity, was undoubtedly encouraging Vicky to *express herself* at this time, to a degree that was hardly well judged. The fruits of this histrionic tuition were to achieve a triumph in 1851. A young man of twenty was to fall in love with this undoubtedly fascinating little girl of ten.

That was Exhibition Year. When a London errand-boy saw two foreigners in frenzied argument in the street, he

stood and shouted: "Go it, ALL NATIONS!" These naïve words typify 1851.

All nations flocked to London to give their blessing to the Utopian era to be inaugurated by Prince Albert's Great Exhibition in Hyde Park. What terrible irony! It was the Great Exhibition which inaugurated the epoch of bloody European conflict which is still with us. It was the Great Exhibition which brought together Victoria, Princess Royal of England, and her future Prussian husband. As young Prince William Frederick of Prussia watched admiringly the elegant, winning eldest child of the British Sovereign, the seeds of that calamitous marriage were sown which was to smooth the path for the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse.

First in the estimation of Victoria and Albert among the foreign Royal guests at the Palace were Crown Prince William of Prussia, Crown Princess Augusta, and their twenty-year-old son, Prince Frederick William. Young Frederick William, tall, slender, blue-eyed, fair, lightly bewhiskered, was a striking and rather diffident figure in his tight military uniform. Vicky was hardly interested in the presence of this aloof giant. Used to the easy conversation and compliments of maturer men, she sometimes edged near him out of curiosity to hear what he might have to say to her. The result was disappointing. The young officer edged away and broke into rapid conversation with somebody grown up. Frederick William—like many young men of his age—was frightened of all little girls, but especially of this one. It was remarked that his attention was much directed toward her when she was engaged elsewhere. It would be an exaggeration to say that the Prussian Prince fell in love with this child. He was fascinated by her.

His father, the Crown Prince, had been the guest of Queen Victoria for some months in 1848, and he had evidently become close friends with Vicky at that time. Frequently this imposing Prussian officer, with fierce blue eyes darting out of his superb mass of whisker, was seen in Windsor driving alone with Vicky in a carriage and four, the two of them in animated conversation. There is not much doubt

that Crown Prince William went home to Prussia in 1848 with serious thoughts of one day marrying his son to the Princess Royal of England.

IV

May Day—the opening and dedication of the Great Exhibition—was an unforgettable day for the Royal Family. Papa had talked about nothing else for months. He had often been worried and despondent and Vicky had been his comforter. Even at the age of eleven she was beginning to be more intellectually in tune with her father than was the Queen. She spent most of that glorious day holding her father's hand. They experienced the day together.

The Queen, in her diary, has left a remarkably vivid impression of the moment of the opening. After passing down Rotten Row, which was lined with troops and dense masses of spectators 'quite like Coronation Day,' they at last descended, a compact little body, and stood gazing up at the incredible building where the sunlight played through the thousands of panes of glass upon the lofty park trees enclosed within.

'The glimpse of the transept through the iron gates, the waving plumes, flowers, statues, myriads of people filling the galleries and seats around, with the flourish of trumpets as we entered, gave us a sensation which I can never forget, and I felt much moved.' So wrote the Queen that evening. 'We went for a moment to a little side-room where we left our shawls. In a few minutes we proceeded, Albert leading me, with Vicky at his hand and Bertie holding mine. The sight as we came to the middle, where the steps and chairs (which I did not sit on) were placed, with the beautiful crystal fountain in front of it, was magical—so vast, so glorious, so touching. The tremendous cheers, the joy expressed in every face, the immensity of the building the trees, the fountain, the organ (with six hundred instruments and two hundred voices, which sounded like nothing), and my beloved husband, the author of this festival—all this

was moving indeed. God bless my dearest country which has shown itself so great to-day !'

'God Save the Queen' died away. Her Majesty seated herself on the Throne, her children beside her, Vicky much pleased with a choice bouquet which had been slipped into her hand. Prince Albert stepped forward to join the head of the Exhibition Commissioners, 'a curious assemblage of political and distinguished men.' He read the long Commissioners' report. Her Majesty gave a *short* answer. The Archbishop of Canterbury offered up an appropriate prayer. The Hallelujah Chorus rang out. He Sing, the mysterious Chinese mandarin—erroneously stated to be the Chinese Ambassador, but in all probability a hoaxer—found the moment appropriate to glide forward and make deep obeisance to the Queen.

'The procession began. The whole long walk from one end to the other was made in the midst of continued and deafening cheers and waving of handkerchiefs. Everyone's face was bright and smiling, many with tears in their eyes. Many Frenchmen called "Vive la Reine !" The old Duke of Wellington and Lord Anglesey walked arm in arm.

That day was little Arthur's (the Duke of Connaught's) birthday and not the least touching moment was after the return to the Palace. At 5 p.m., when they were all assembled, the 'good old Duke' (Wellington) came in and presented to Arthur a golden cup and some toys which he himself bought at a toyshop. Wellington was celebrating his own eighty-second birthday that day, so he had a special fellow-feeling for Arthur. Arthur handed him a nosegay.

In 1853 a lamentable happening, not without its comic side, overtook the Royal Family. Bertie developed measles, his father caught it and was seriously ill. The Queen took it in nursing her husband. Vicky caught it. Alice, Helena, Louise, and Arthur caught it. Mercifully, Leopold, two months old, did not catch it. The Court retired with measles. The servants caught it, distinguished guests to Leopold's christening carried the measles back to Belgium,

Coburg, and Hanover. A measles epidemic spread through Germany.

It was early in that year that Vicky was drawn more closely to the side of her father than ever she had been before. There were people in high places who had long been jealous of Prince Albert. A whispering campaign was set afoot to the effect that he was unlawfully interfering in matters of State. Dangerous rumours were exciting the whole country. There was serious trouble in Parliament. Dense crowds collected on Tower Hill to see Prince Albert handed over under guard to the Lieutenant of the Tower. The rumour bringing them together was a hoax, but it well illustrates the excitable public mind. Albert had done more for England than any other foreigner had ever done. Indeed, he was slowly but surely sacrificing his health by hard work. He was bitterly upset and disappointed. If he had sometimes taken the initiative when, strictly speaking, this was ill-advised, the Queen alone was to blame.

In those days of misery his daughter Vicky gave him great comfort. She was old enough to understand. Perhaps he sensed that the child, by her fine intellect, possessed a truer comprehension of his tragedy than did his wife. At all events, it has been suggested that the Queen was actually becoming a little jealous of her eldest daughter. The happening is not too uncommon in families. Certainly, if true in this case, the Queen never abated her deep love for Vicky.

Every time Prince Albert's birthday came round, it was the custom for the children, organized by Vicky, to prepare recitations which they thought would please Papa. Vicky, with a sound understanding of Papa's mentality, chose the verses. These were of such abstruse, philosophical trend that the others had little idea what they were talking about. If anybody fell down on his verses or declaimed them in completely nonsensical manner it was Bertie, and Papa used to frown when that happened. Pieces carefully practised on the piano and violin were played to Papa on the afternoon of this day and he smilingly received scraps of needlework

and carefully planned essays. Bertie hated the whole performance worse each year.

On the fourteenth anniversary of Papa and Mama's wedding day—February 10th, 1854—Baroness Bunsen, wife of the Prussian Ambassador, was privileged to be present at an especially elaborate entertainment organized by the Royal children. She paints a picture of which the quaint and mellow atmosphere is perfectly typical of the mid-Victorian family in high life. Headed by the Queen and Prince Albert, the guests filed through room after room in Buckingham Palace. It was half-past five in the afternoon. They reached a room where one end was cut off by red curtains. They were lighted to their seats by candles. Then they were left in darkness, listening to much whispering and scuffling behind the curtain.

'The curtain was drawn,' says Baroness Bunsen. 'Princess Alice dressed to represent Spring recited some verses from Thompson's "Seasons," enumerating the flowers which Spring scatters around. She did it very well, in a tone of voice like that of the Queen. Then the curtain was drawn and the whole scene changed, and the Princess Royal represented Summer, with Prince Arthur lying upon some sheaves as if tired with the heat and the harvest work. The Princess Royal also recited verses. There was a change. Prince Arthur, with a crown of vine leaves and a panther's skin, represented Autumn, recited verses, and looked very well. There was a change to a winter landscape; and the Prince of Wales represented Winter, with a white beard and a cloak with icicles or snowflakes, and the Princess Louise, warmly clothed, who seemed watching the fire; and the Prince also recited well a passage altered from Thompson. Another change was made and all the seasons were grouped together; and far behind on high, appeared the Princess Helena, with a long veil hanging to her feet and a long cross in her hand, pronouncing a blessing on the Queen and Prince in the name of all the seasons. . . . The Queen ordered the curtain to be again drawn back and we saw the whole Royal Family; and they were helped to jump down from

their raised platform, and then all came into the light and we saw them well. . . . The baby, Prince Leopold, was brought in by the nurse and looked at us with big eyes, and wanted to go to his Papa.'

The festival ended with a dinner party for the grown-ups. Vicky, Bertie, and Alice were given chairs at the table where they partook of a limited portion of the menu. Helena, Louise, and Prince Arthur waited in a shy line in the shadow thrown by the candlelight beside the Queen's chair. With the dessert the three youngsters were sent off to bed, quite dazed with wonder.

That same month Britain went to war. The Crimean War seems very remote to-day. But among the aristocratic dwellers in Mayfair in those emotional days there was hardly a dry eye as regiment after regiment was drafted to the Crimea. The St. James's Street clubs were emptying. Her Majesty, Prince Albert and the children gathered on the balcony of Buckingham Palace to watch the Guards march away. Soon Mayfair was full of mourning gowns.

The tragic winter of 1854 was a black time for all the Royal Family. Every time news of the Crimean army arrived it was worse than the previous despatch. Skeleton invalids and badly wounded troops began to fill the London hospitals. Whenever the Queen appeared in the hospital wards, Vicky was with her. Smothered in beard, eyes staring from haggard faces, withered by neglect in the terrible Russian winter, the simple, illiterate men propped themselves up joyfully at the sight of the Royal ladies.

Vicky was no mean artist—she was later described as not just a good amateur but of sound professional standard—and her sketches and paintings were sold at high prices at charity bazaars for the wounded. Nothing but the War was talked about at the Royal table. The Queen was in very low spirits. When, in the February following, when things were hardly improved, Lord Raglan paid a flying visit to Buckingham Palace, it was Vicky who caught his arm as he was leaving, crying: "For Heaven's sake, hurry back to Sebastopol and take it or else you will kill Mama!"

There is a stirring picture of a scene that took place in Buckingham Palace just after the Crimean War. The picture was a best-seller, for many copies of it are still to be found in second-hand shops. The hall is full of wounded soldiers and N.C.O.s of the Guards. With their great beards they look old men as they sit on rows of chairs in their battle-stained scarlet. Before them, in bonnet and crinoline, stand the Queen and Vicky. The Queen chats with one of the men, while the men behind, obviously delighted, are craning forward to catch Her Majesty's eye, in hope of having a word with her. Another bearded warrior, bursting with pride, is showing Vicky a bullet hole in his coatee. It is on record that the Royal ladies lingered while dinner was laid out and served to the troops by the Royal servants. Her Majesty and Vicky had to acknowledge many a Royal toast drunk in beer.

Since the War the Emperor Napoleon had been the Ally of England. In August, 1855, the richly painted and gilded Royal Yacht, *Victoria and Albert*, steamed out of Dover roadstead, carrying the Queen, Prince Albert, Vicky, and Bertie on a State visit to the charming and flamboyant Emperor—not so long ago a humble London special constable—and now, in the opinion of many Englishmen, no more than 'a bloodstained adventurer.' Already his lovely and fascinating Empress, Eugénie, was the toast of Europe.

An amusing story concerning Vicky went the rounds of the Courts of Europe at this time. It was a true story. Queen Victoria, although celebrated throughout the Continent for the wonderful domestic harmony in her Royal homes, was considered to be not at all sartorially minded. It was thought in high circles in Paris that Parisians would be much disillusioned at the unfashionable appearance of the English Queen. Nothing could be done about that. She was Queen. But it was suggested that the English part of the Royal procession would be brightened in interest for Parisians if the Queen's charming daughter could be displayed to them in the height of fashion.

A subtle ruse was adopted by Napoleon III which might or might not achieve the desired result. Vicky was known

to have a life-size doll which had been given to her by one of her foreign relations. Somehow Napoleon obtained the measurements of the doll, which corresponded fairly exactly with the figure of Vicky. He gave an order to a leading modiste of Paris to make a complete trousseau for the doll of the Princess Royal. This consisted of a morning toilette, evening toilette, and two ball dresses. A contemporary report says that 'each gown is a perfect *chef d'œuvre*, especially the ball dresses, which would excite the envy of our most fashionable duchesses. One is of *gros de Naples*, the second of pink gauze, with velvet flowers exquisitely made. The small embroidered and trimmed pocket handkerchiefs, the exquisite silk stockings, slippers, Indian cashmere shawl, bonnets, a black lace scarf were all made with incredible care.' With this went a jewel case containing diamonds of the finest water. It was Napoleon's way to do things in style. This enchanting trousseau was packed in a fine wood chest, stamped with the Royal Arms of France and addressed to the doll of the Princess Royal.

It did not take the Queen long to realize that if the beautiful garments would fit Vicky's doll, they would also fit Vicky! She did not quite approve of the *style* of the dresses. Still, if she put Vicky into these expensive clothes for the French State visit it would save her worrying her head about what on earth she ought to dress the child in, and into the bargain no end of money would be saved. So Vicky learned that she was going to Paris in a dazzling array of glory, such as she had hardly dreamed of.

The English drive through Paris roused intense interest. The Queen's dress was called several years out of date. Nevertheless, for an entirely different reason, she scored a huge success. The Paris newspapers were responsible. They called Her Majesty 'La Bonne Mère de Famille.' The idea caught the Parisian imagination. Here was something truly novel! Parisians fell into rhapsodies over the virtue and the superb domestic qualities of the Queen. '*La Bonne Mère de Famille*' was a phrase bandied about at the boulevard cafés. It was remarked that '*Le home*'—previously regarded

chiefly as a dormitory—'advanced in favour under the Royal auspices.'

The Royal Family settled into superb apartments at St. Cloud. Each day they drove into Paris to see the sights and attend functions in their honour. One evening the Royal Family stood before the Tomb of Napoleon, while Napoleon III smirked proudly in the background at this homage to his ancestor, and the moon bathed the galaxy of glittering uniforms and pastel satins in soft light. It is even said that, at the bidding of their parents, the Prince of Wales and the Princess Royal of England knelt before the Tomb. The climax of the Royal visit came with the last function, the Grand Ball at Versailles. Nothing so splendid as this had been seen in Paris since the days of Marie Antoinette and it was the first time Versailles had been prepared for a great festival since the Revolution.

Vicky appeared at the ball with a wreath of real roses about her head and delighted the great of Paris by her 'pure beauty.' 'In the centre of the glorious Hall of Mirrors,' says an eye-witness, 'the finest ball room in Europe, lighted with wax candles at a cost of 60,000 francs, the Princess Royal danced the quadrille of honour with a Marshal of France and next waltzed with the Emperor, and was the cynosure of all eyes as she sat with the Royal group in the elevated chairs.'

Near noon on August 27th the Emperor Napoleon escorted them aboard the *Victoria and Albert* at Boulogne, amid the roar of cannon and beating of drums. Bertie is supposed to have turned to the Emperor and said:

"I wish we could stay on with you here for a time after Papa and Mama have left. There are six more of us at home and they don't want *us*! Please ask them if we can."

It is not on record that Napoleon did ask for the children to stay. At all events, they disembarked at Osborne with Papa and Mama and took the train for the Highlands.

Prince Albert was pleased with both children. "I am bound to praise the children greatly," he told their grandmother, the Duchess of Kent. "They pleased everybody."

The task was no easy one for them. They discharged it without embarrassment and with natural simplicity."

V

At this time the possibility of a marriage between Vicky and the Prince of Prussia was occupying the mind of Prince Albert a good deal. To him it meant more than an alliance between the Royal Families of England and Prussia, which was not in itself an especially attractive prospect, since Prussia was then but one of many German States. He saw in an Anglo-Prussian match the achievement of an ambition which had been with him since his boyhood. Although a Cobourgher himself, he had always dreamed of a mighty German Empire, formed by an amalgamation of the German States, and he believed that the only people in Germany with the virility to bring such an Empire into being were the Prussians. Therefore, he saw the Prussian Hohenzollerns one day supplying Emperors to the Imperial German Throne. This great German Empire as visualized by Prince Albert was a totally different conception from the terrible 'blood and iron' Empire which actually did come into being under the coercion of Prussia. It was his belief that the Germans were the most cultured people in the world, and that *nothing* could be more beneficial for the peace and progressive welfare of the entire Continent than the powerful and entirely benevolent influence of an unassailable German Empire.

This was the secret of the hankering of Prince Albert for an Anglo-Prussian match. He was still a young man—in his middle thirties—and he expected to live for many years. He saw the Hohenzollerns of Prussia, guided by his daughter who, in her turn, would be guided by himself, leading the States of Germany into a close alliance which would eventually emerge as a German Empire of which Vicky, in his lifetime, would become Empress. Indeed, Prince Albert, far away in England, saw himself playing behind the scenes that decisive role which Bismarck was actually to play

grimly before many years had passed. Bismarck's suspicion in the years to come that the wife of Prince Frederick William was attempting to bring to bear influence from London was a tragically exaggerated sentiment, but his views were only exaggerated *because at that time the Prince Consort was dead.*

As evidence of the ambition of Prince Albert to create this ideal German Empire, there is in existence somewhere in Britain a pamphlet written by him and entitled, 'The German Question Explained.' Here his scheme is set down in black and white, although, of course, at the time it was written Vicky had not been born. There is some mystery about this interesting pamphlet. Sir Theodore Martin, who wrote the Life of the Prince Consort, mentions it, although he had never seen it. It is probable that Queen Victoria saw it. To-day, not one copy of the pamphlet can be found.

Prince Albert was a keen philosophical student and, therefore, his mind ran upon practical lines. In essence his scheme for a German Empire was entirely practical and, in a sense, he was eager to sacrifice his favourite daughter to make his ideal a reality. He failed where so many men of brilliant intellect fail. He was a bad reader of human nature. Many a man with half his intellectual power could rightly have told him that, whatever Prussians might achieve, it was not in their nature to create an Empire with the altruistic purposes he had planned.

There were at that moment two other men in Europe who dreamed of a German Empire created by Prussia. One of them was Prince Frederick William of Prussia, the destined husband of Vicky; the other was a tough ex-major of Dragoons, turned diplomat, whose name was Bismarck.

Prince Frederick William was a romantic. He saw a German Empire ruled by Prussian Emperors in terms of the Holy Roman Empire. He went to museums, to tombs in old cathedrals, and to his history books to dream. In one way his dream approached the conception of Prince Albert, for he, too, saw a mighty and benevolent Empire, guiding the peoples of Europe. Prince Frederick's dream was neither as practical nor as concrete as that of Prince Albert. Almost

certainly Prince Albert was aware of this ; in which case, he was justified in thinking that this well-intentioned young Prussian would be as clay in the hands of his brilliant and forceful Vicky.

Bismarck, the other dreamer, dreamed his dream in the Prussian Embassy in Paris. He dreamed of a German Empire of Blood and Iron.

In 1852 Crown Princess Augusta arrived in London to stay with her aunt, Queen Adelaide, the widow of William IV. There must have been some people who thought that one of the reasons for Crown Princess Augusta's visit was to sound Queen Victoria and her husband about the possibility of a marriage between Frederick William and Vicky. Among the knowing ones who were thinking along these lines was Baron Bunsen, the Prussian Ambassador, who was a close friend of Prince Albert. It is improbable that Albert had openly expressed his ambitions to the Prussian Ambassador, but he may have thrown out veiled hints.

At mid-morning on the day of Princess Augusta's arrival Baron Bunsen called at Marlborough House to pay his respects. He was taken to a waiting-room in the Princess's suite of apartments. While he waited his gaze fell upon two portraits, one at each end of the marble mantelpiece. One was of the Princess Royal and the other of Prince Frederick William of Prussia. He regarded these for a while and thought his own thoughts. The Princess did not come. He looked down at the journals and periodicals spread on the table before him. Among these was a new portfolio of engravings sent on approval to Marlborough House from a St. James's Street printseller. The Baron turned over the engravings. He stopped when he came to a coloured lithograph of the celebrated farmhouse on the field of Waterloo called by the Belgians 'La Belle Alliance.' He regarded the picture thoughtfully for about a minute. He walked across to the mantelpiece and took down the portraits of the Princess Royal and Prince Frederick William. These he carried over to the table. After a moment's hesitation he laid the portraits of the Prince and Princess side by side

over the picture of 'La Belle Alliance.' The farmhouse was completely hidden, but the title below it was still in view.

Princess Augusta entered. She came near the table. The Baron, after paying his respects, let his eyes fall to 'La Belle Alliance.' The Princess looked in the same direction. The eyes of the Prussian Ambassador met the eyes of the Princess of Prussia. Augusta gave not a flicker of the eyelids.

"You seem to have been enjoying much better weather over here than we have been having in Berlin, Herr Baron," she remarked. The Baron agreed. He was perfectly happy to discuss the weather if it pleased the Princess. He was quite certain he knew the chief reason for her visit to London. For one thing, the Princess had forgotten to control her hands, even if her eyes were tolerably well disciplined.

Three years later, in the early summer, Prince Frederick William was asked by his father and mother if he would like to marry the Princess Royal of England. His eyes lightened with pleasure. He had not seen Vicky since the days of the Great Exhibition, but he answered instantly. It is perfectly true that, at that instant, he saw himself wedded not only to the Princess Royal but also to *England*, and that to him was the most remarkable and romantic thing on earth.

But the matter was not settled because Prince Frederick William was filled with delight. Even though it was certain that Queen Victoria and Prince Albert would approve and exceedingly likely that the Princess Royal would follow their advice, there was a grave obstacle which the parents would have been wise to consider before speaking to their son. The obstacle was Prince Frederick William's uncle, the King of Prussia. When the parents arrived to tell him about their son's hopes the irate old gentleman went almost into a fit. He had been a little mad off and on for several years. He was not so grievously upset merely because he hated England—although he certainly had not much use for it. He was horror-struck at the thought of what Queen Elizabeth would say if he had to tell her that he had consented to such a match.

Queen Elizabeth was intensely pro-Russian and, therefore, in those days she was a fierce Anglophobe. She regarded Prince Albert as Russia's bitterest adversary and she had infected many of the junker families of Prussia with her sentiments. That was why the King of Prussia stormed up and down his study, striking his head and crying: "Nein, nein, nein." The Crown Prince and Princess drove away. They did not tell their son of the disillusionment. They made several more attempts to bring the King to reason. Incidentally, it is pretty certain that nobody in Prussia knew what was going on and the King did not tell Queen Elizabeth. At last, Prince Frederick William's parents had to tell him that the English match must be abandoned. And they told him why.

The Prince was a great favourite with the King. He arrived at the Palace that afternoon and asked for a private interview. Nobody knows what passed in the study, but Frederick William walked into his parents' house.

"I have His Majesty's consent to make an offer of marriage to the Princess Royal," he announced.

The Prince did not spread the news of the matrimonial mission on which he was about to embark, though he may have confided in one or two friends. His parents told nobody. Nor, evidently, did the King—not even Queen Elizabeth.

It is not certain how the story leaked out—possibly it came via England—but thinly-veiled reports of coming events began to appear in the Berlin newspapers.

One afternoon in September the King's old personal A.D.C., General Gerlach, thrust himself into the Royal study without ceremony. His brow was clouded. He clutched a copy of the *Cologne Gazette*.

"It is time Your Majesty was made aware of the absurd reports which are going the rounds," he exclaimed, his voice thick with indignation. "Here it boldly proclaims that the young Prince is now on his way to England via Ostend to propose marriage to the Princess Royal!"

The King laughed, a little feverishly. "Well, yes," he

murmured, "and that is really the case." The King walked up and down, gently washing his hands in the air. The amazed A.D.C. walked out, forgetting to bow.

While Prince Frederick William is on his way to Britain is a fitting time to consider the personality of this young Prussian, who from now on plays such an important part in the story.

One action of twenty-four-year-old Prince Frederick William, the fair-haired, blue-eyed Prussian who fell under the spell of a small girl, gives a remarkable insight into his character. It was part of a typically Prussian incident which took place at Potsdam. On the evening before the second great Annual Ball at the Berlin Opera House the officers of the Royal Guards in garrison at Potsdam decided in mass not to dance with Fräulein Hinckeldy, the daughter of the unpopular Minister of Police. Prince Frederick William belonged to a Guards Regiment and the resolution was formally taken to him, under a belief that as a member of the Guards Corps he would express approval. Having read the missive the Prince immediately hurried to the officers' mess.

He entered the mess and asked for silence. Everybody knew what the paper was which he held in his hand.

"Gentlemen," he said, "if you are dissatisfied with the conduct of Herr Hinckeldy take such steps to signify your displeasure as you may deem fit, but it seems to me that it would ill become the character of gentlemen for us to be rude to a lady on his account. To-morrow that lady shall be the first whom I shall solicit for the honour of a dance."

Prince Frederick William had gone home after the Great Exhibition with the exaggerated idea that Britain was the perfect State. There were many reasons why his mind worked along these lines. He was dazzled by the splendour of Empire which was spread before him at the Exhibition, he was enchanted by the brilliance and yet the domestic simplicity of the English Court, he was awed by the soaring intellect of Prince Albert. He visited Oxford and the great industrial centres. In every direction he looked he was

carried away. Everything, moreover, he saw at a time when he was able to frame it in an aura of romanticism.

After the Exhibition Prince Frederick William returned from London to the coarse brutalities of Bonn University, with its strutting student corps and scarred duellists. His thoughts dwelt on the gentle majesty of England and English life. He acquired an English tutor, Mr. Perry. Perry was valued not only as a teacher but as one who could take the Prince on imaginary travels along the highway of English life.

'At the request of the Prince,' says Perry, 'I visited him three times a week and superintended his studies in English history and literature, in both of which he took especial interest. His love for England and his great veneration for the Queen were most remarkable, and our intercourse became very agreeable and confidential. He manifested the keenest interest for England's political and social life.' So absorbed was Frederick William in his pursuit of English life that he and Perry used to write each other letters as from one imaginary English Minister or a high member of London society to another. It might almost be said that in those years before he went to England to seek his bride, this admirable young Prince of Prussia had Anglo-mania.

'I do not care for the world, as you know, which I find empty and with very little happiness in it,' wrote Prince Frederick William to his beloved French tutor, the Swiss pastor Godet. Those words were to be written a few months later, when telling his old friend of the happy restfulness which came to him in the company of his fiancée, the Princess Royal. His own words clearly indicate the trend of his character.

VI

Just as Frederick William's future mother-in-law, Queen Victoria, always needed the support of some man of powerful character, it was the double misfortune of this Prince of Prussia that not only did he in similar wise call for a strong



From the Royal Collection at Windsor. Painting by F. Winterhalter
QUEEN VICTORIA AND PRINCE ALBERT WITH THE FAMILY
 Vicky, Princess Royal, is seated on the stool on the right.



From the Royal Collection at Windsor. Painting by E. M. Ward, R.A.
QUEEN VICTORIA WITH PRINCE ALBERT, BERTIE, AND VICKY, PRINCESS ROYAL, VISITS THE TOMB OF NAPOLEON BY MOONLIGHT DURING THE STATE VISIT TO FRANCE IN 1855
 Napoleon III stands beside the Queen. Facing them the Prince of Wales stands by the Tomb with the Princess Royal beside him. On the extreme right, Prince Albert.

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woman at his side, but that that woman should be Vicky, daughter of Prince Albert, the idealist Anglo-Coburger.

His Royal Highness Prince Frederick William of Prussia arrived at Aberdeen on a sunny Friday in September and proceeded by the little Dundee railway to Banchory, the nearest station to Balmoral. Prince Albert and General Grey, who had posted thirty miles from the Castle, awaited him. Darkness was falling over Craithie as the carriage rumbled across the white bridge to the gates of the Royal estate.

The gates swung open, displaying an avenue of dancing fire. The ghillies, shepherds, and gardeners of Balmoral lined the drive with blazing pine torches. The trotting carriage horses dropped into a walk. Pipers slipped out of the shadows and marched before them. Ahead the flames played on the swelling satins and the black evening dress of a group of ladies and gentlemen clustered outside the Castle porch—the Royal Family and suite. Behind the carriage the stern, bearded torch-bearers fell in, a disciplined, fiery procession. Stammering with emotion, the Prussian Prince thanked Her Majesty for the Highland welcome, then turned in startled surprise as the torch procession stampeded with wild shouts, showering the hissing torches into a great bonfire near the feet of the Royal party. The pipers struck up a reel and the grim giants in their flapping kilts began to prance lightly about the flaming pile.

For several days Prince Frederick William was content to drive the Abergeldie woods for deer with Prince Albert, enjoying—as the newspapers put it—‘the majestic scenery and the beautiful autumnal tints of the woods.’ After breakfast on the 20th he watched for an opportunity when the Queen and her husband were alone. The task of stating his mission was made no easier by his knowledge that for several days the mother and father had been waiting and wondering as to when and how he would declare himself. Formality for lovers was the vogue in the eighteen-fifties. Frederick William took the simplest line, stating baldly that he wished to marry the Princess Royal, that in their

short acquaintance he had found her altogether fascinating and that he had the consent of the King of Prussia and of his parents.

Since the reason for the Prince's visit had been much discussed in letters between the parents beforehand, all the Royal couple had to do was to express gravely their approval and consent.

"That Vicky will have no objection to make I regard as probable," said Prince Albert. "We therefore accept your proposal in principle, Fritz. Nevertheless, as Vicky is now only fourteen, it is our opinion that you should return next spring, when Vicky has been confirmed, and then put your proposal to her yourself."

To the dismay of the suitor, Her Majesty nodded her head vigorously at this declaration.

"We are delighted," Her Majesty informed him. "The marriage must not take place till Vicky has reached her seventeenth birthday. Then she will be of age."

Frederick William agreed with the wisdom of the Royal words and, much crestfallen, clicked himself from the room with Prussian stiffness.

'I have been much pleased with him (Fritz),' wrote Prince Albert immediately afterwards to Stockmar. 'His prominent qualities are great thought, straightforwardness, frankness, and honesty. He appears to be free from prejudices and pre-eminently well-intentioned; he speaks of himself as personally greatly attracted by Vicky.'

Then Prince Albert sent a letter to 'Pam,' Lord Palmerston, the redoubtable and plainspoken Foreign Minister. 'Pam' was at liberty to tell Lord Melbourne, the Prime Minister. Nobody else must know. Meanwhile the Queen was seated at her desk writing to Uncle Leopold. Of course, he must be told the news at once. He must keep it to himself.

Hardly had these confidential letters been received than a flood of congratulations began to arrive by every post at Balmoral, not only from all over Europe, but from Britain as well! Prince Frederick William was pained and excited.

Her Majesty was excessively aggravated. Prince Albert almost lost his cool serenity. Vicky wanted to know what all the letters were about which they kept pushing under the table.

The Continental newspapers got the story. They expressed themselves frankly. Fortunately, Vicky did not read *The Times*. That journal referred to the Hohenzollerns as 'a paltry German dynasty,' and mournfully prophesied that the Princess Royal would be returned to England 'an exile and a fugitive.'

An atmosphere of restraint and embarrassment lingered in the living-rooms at Balmoral. Only Vicky, knowing nothing about the business, was her own happy self. Frederick William was working himself into a fever. So, incidentally, was Napoleon III, across the Channel. Did this startling alliance mean that Great Britain meant to range herself with Prussia at the expense of France? He tugged his waxed moustaches with agitation and oaths issued from his sleek lips until a personal letter from Queen Victoria arrived to reassure him.

When Frederick William came to the Queen and Prince Albert on the morning of the 29th, begging to be allowed to speak to Vicky, they agreed with relief that this would be best. If Vicky had not secretly discovered by that time what was afoot, she would in any case very soon learn.

That afternoon they all went for a ride up the wild hill-side of Craigna-ban. Vicky and Frederick William had dropped some way behind when they came down Glen Gironoch. The Prince kept having trouble with his pony. When he unexpectedly dismounted, perhaps Vicky thought he was going to tighten the girths. Instead, he bent down and picked a large sprig of white heather. Saying nothing, he put it into her hand. The gesture meant more to a Victorian maiden than it would mean to-day. His eyes, in any case, were eloquent even to an English Princess of fourteen. It was not really necessary for him to embark on that formal declaration of his hopes which he felt bound to make as soon as he was remounted. Vicky had already

accepted him with the poise of a woman of twice her years. Happily, they caught up the others. Nothing was said. They reached the Castle.

No sooner had Vicky thrown aside her riding habit than, seized either with shame at her immodest and daring behaviour or with intense emotional happiness, she called for Fritz and rushed him into the presence of her parents. Hiding her face in her father's waistcoat, she burst into tears and the room rang with her sobs. Words of explanation were unneeded. The paroxysm of weeping was infectious. Fritz wiped his eyes with dignity. Her Majesty entirely gave way, with much enjoyment. "While deep visible revolutions in the emotional natures of the two young people and their mother were taking place," Prince Albert told a friend, "my feeling was rather one of cheerful satisfaction and gratitude to God for bringing across our path so much that was noble and good." Was Albert thinking as he uttered those words that the man with 'so much that was noble and good' in him might well achieve great things across the Rhine under the tutelage of himself and his daughter?

"It was my heart."

Thus eloquently did Frederick William describe to Mr. Perry, his English tutor, the reason for his engagement.

'On devine ceux qui aiment !' wrote Napoleon III, after the Prince of Prussia had stayed with him on the way home. He sighed with relief. Perhaps there really was no deep political motive behind the Anglo-Prussian liaison. Even the German States, with the most outspoken Press in Europe, could find nothing political in it, though they did not necessarily approve or omit to suggest that the ultimate result might have sensational repercussions. In Prussia it was immediately recognized that if the marriage took place it was going to favour the Liberals at the expense of the brutal conservatism of the junkers—the hereditary ruling landowners who were struggling to bring their reactionary policy to bear upon the Prussian people. Thus long before Vicky set foot on German soil there was a powerful set of men and

women in Berlin who were ready to meet her as an enemy until she gave them reason for seeing her in a different light. Bismarck was one of this set. He had his comment to make on the marriage, as we shall see in due course. Only Prince Albert, poring over his books on statecraft, ethics, and philosophy, knew as he sat in his study that there was more than a love match there.

Frederick William arrived back in Berlin. His father met him on the platform.

"What do you think of your bride-to-be, Fritz?" he asked.

This is what the son is supposed to have given as his answer: "In my position and with my future destiny, my special duty is to consider the mind, character, and tendencies of my future consort, infinitely more than external appearances. The latter won my heart; the former my admiration and profound respect; they are such as are fully worthy of her Royal mother and such as are best qualified to ensure my domestic happiness and win for my wife and me the love and esteem of the Prussian nation."

The words are borrowed from the *Souvenir* pamphlet of the Princess Royal, published in London at the time of her wedding. The words may not be authentic, but the sentiments are in character. The stilted little declaration is sadly ironic in view of all that was to happen in the years ahead.

Prince Frederick William could not be long in Berlin without knowing that there were enemies in the camp; and at the head of them was Queen Elizabeth.

One day he dined with the British Ambassador. He sat beside Lady Bloomfield, the Ambassador's wife.

"I was bitterly disappointed when the Queen and Prince Albert insisted that my marriage with the Princess Royal must be postponed for two years," the Prince told his hostess. "However, in view of the ugly party feeling which is running here just now, I think, between you and me, that it is really a good thing. I hope this will have passed when the time comes."

The Prince had good reason to feel sore at Prussian party feeling at that moment, for Louise, his favourite sister, had just been married. Because she and her eldest brother were known to have Liberal leanings many of the best families of Prussia had marked the occasion by their absence.

There is an interesting sidelight on the Anglo-Prussian marriage, regarded from the English standpoint, to be found in a contemporary travel book, *July Holiday in Saxony*, by Walter White. The author, while on a walking tour, was shown over the castle of Fishbach by a Dresdener. He was told that the castle belonged to Prince Frederick William of Prussia.

" "A snug little place," said the Dresdener as we walked from room to room.

" "Not quite what your Princess Royal has been used to, perhaps; but she will be able to pass her summer holidays agreeably enough." And quickly the question followed, "What do you think of the marriage in England? Is it popular?"

" "Not very," I answered; "your Prussian Prince would have stood no chance had the King of Sardinia been a Protestant. Nothing but the wholesome ingredient of Protestantism saves Prussia from becoming an offence to English nostrils."

" "So-o-o-o!" ejaculated the Dresdener, while he made pointed arches of the eyebrows. "That sounds pleasant in the Prince's own castle!"

In England a great deal of attention was still being given to the coming marriage. Shrewd old Baron Stockmar was especially interested, as he was in everything that had to do with the Royal Family. Indeed, he had some claim to be as the tutor of Albert and the bosom friend of Uncle Leopold in the far-off days when the latter had been husband to ill-fated Princess Charlotte who, but for her death in childbirth, would have filled Victoria's place on the Throne. Stockmar received letters from Vicky. He was a familiar figure in the Royal homes and was in a good position to form an

opinion about the Princess. His diary is evidence that he did so.

"From her youth upwards I have been fond of her," he wrote. "I have always expected great things of her and taken all pains to be of service to her. I think her to be exceptionally gifted in some things, even to the point of genius." But it is also clear from other entries that Stockmar was not satisfied that Vicky was a person of discretion or that she was likely to develop into a person of entirely sound judgment. Stockmar had read her aright.

A very attractive picture of Vicky at this time is to be found in a letter by the celebrated Mr. Cobden of the Anti-Corn Law League.

'It is generally known that the young Prince Frederick William of Prussia is to be married to our Princess Royal,' he wrote to a friend when the news was beginning to leak out. 'I was dining *tête-à-tête* with Mr. Buchanan, the American Minister, a few days ago, who had dined the day before at the Queen's table and sat next to the Princess Royal. He was in raptures about her and said she was the most charming girl he had ever met: "All life and spirit, full of frolic and fun, with an excellent head and a *heart as big as a mountain*"—those were his words. Another friend of mine, Colonel Fritzmayr, dined with the Queen last week and, in writing to me a description of the company, he says that when the Princess smiles "it makes one feel as if additional light were thrown upon the scene." So I should judge that this said Prince is a lucky fellow and I trust that he will make a good husband. If not, although a man of peace, I shall consider it a *casus belli*!'

Certainly, these tributes to the personality of a girl of fourteen from middle-aged men of affairs are somewhat remarkable.

No sooner had Prince Frederick William left England than Prince Albert took his daughter in hand with pronounced gusto. He set to work to train her not as the future consort of a Prussian king, but as a future King of Prussia. That is sinister enough, having regard to the Prussian temperament

with its belief in the Salic law and its relegation of women to the background—an outlook which, as an intelligent German, he should have understood perfectly well. More sinister still, he began to say to her: "Your place is that of your husband's wife and *your mother's daughter*. You will desire nothing else, but you will also forgo nothing which you owe to your husband *and your mother*." This last was a fatal sentiment for an English Princess to carry with her to Prussia. There exists the proud testimony of the Queen herself that these words were drilled into Vicky at Balmoral, at Osborne, at Windsor, at Buckingham Palace. It was the Queen's idea and Albert had agreed with her. Perhaps he thought that the Queen's words would add weight to his own when he started to guide Vicky in her endeavours in Prussia.

Every morning, wherever the Royal Family happened to be, Vicky came to her father for an hour's instruction in German law, politics, and sociology. Her father did not hide from her his opinion that in most respects English institutions would make a preferable substitute. In his enthusiasm he was trying to *Germanize* her and *Anglicize* her at the same time.

Every international problem that cropped up was thrashed out between father and daughter in the sanctity of the study, often before the Prime Minister and the Foreign Minister had been consulted at all. Important letters of State were passed across the study table to Vicky. She was told to draft a reply. Prince Albert thought the replies remarkably good. He often made use of them.

Every evening between six and seven o'clock Vicky sought out her father once again. They repaired to the study. What followed, to use Prince Albert's own words, was 'a kind of general catechising.' Every subject was broached on these occasions, not merely those useful to a ruler-to-be but also those useful to a bride-to-be. What Vicky learned about life she learned from her father, who was amusingly plain-spoken for a Victorian papa and had his opinions on everything, as we shall see. To clarify her mind Vicky had to set

down her problems on paper and write an essay about them, in so far as she understood them. Then she handed her efforts to Papa for comment and correction. This rule applied equally to personal problems as to 'short compendiums' on Roman history or the Bill of Rights. Prince Albert in his study was cultivating a very brilliant mind in his favourite daughter. But he was doing it as the idealist, not as the philosopher. He had forgotten to sow the seeds of stability, that quality so generally remarkable in himself.

It was not long before Prince Albert decided that Vicky had become sufficiently advanced in her higher education for the commencement of discussions on the Future of the Germanic Race. Gradually, Vicky was able to perceive for herself the part which she might play in the reformation of Europe. It was to be said of Vicky that from her very first days in Berlin that she used 'literally to freeze' when approached by a German reactionary. That was because during those long study discussions with her father she had been allowed to discover that the grimmest obstacle blocking the road to her shining goal was the steel-hearted Prussian Conservative. Unhappily, the mind of Vicky was never brought to realize the simple maxim of statecraft that it pays better to tame and use your enemy than to defy and fight him.

VII

On March 20th, 1856, Vicky was confirmed in the Royal chapel at Windsor Castle. It was almost a State ceremony. Prince Albert led his daughter up the aisle and Uncle Leopold as godfather strutted behind with pompous condescension. The Royal Family, all the Ministers, the high officers of State and the high nobility filled the chapel. The feeble Archbishop of Canterbury and 'Soapy Sam,' celebrated courtier Bishop of Oxford, conducted the ceremony. 'Pussy,' Lord Granville, recorded so superbly crisp an impression of the ceremony in a letter to Lord Canning that it could hardly be bettered. 'Had a slight spasm in bed';

he wrote, 'sent for Meryon. It was well before he came. He desired me not to go to Windsor for the confirmation of the Princess Royal. I went and am none the worse. As Pam observed, "Ah, ah! a touching ceremony; ah, ah!" The King of the Belgians the same as I remember him when I was a boy, using my father's horses and boring my mother to death. The Princess Royal went through her part well. The Princess Alice cried violently. The Archbishop read what seemed a dull address; luckily it was inaudible. The Bishop of Oxford rolled out a short prayer with conscious superiority. Pam reminded Lord Aberdeen of their being confirmed at Cambridge, as if it was yesterday. I must go to bed so excuse haste and bad pens, as the sheep said to the farmer when it jumped out of the fold.'

The Queen opened Parliament a month later. From the steps of the Throne she announced the engagement of the Princess Royal to Prince Frederick William of Prussia.

Shortly afterwards Prince Frederick William arrived for his Spring visit. He came very quietly for it was not desired by the Royal parents that he should figure much before the British public until he was officially presented to them in the following year. It is possible that the Prince was a little disappointed on this visit. He naturally understood the Continental custom of perpetual chaperonage for betrothed couples, but he had heard that it was the English custom to leave engaged lovers to themselves. He found that Her Majesty did not conform to this English practice. The Queen never left them. She assured Uncle Leopold that her duty as chaperone bored her to excess. However, she carried it out with a purpose. She thought it advisable that the couple should not obtain too intimate a knowledge of one another's personality before marriage or otherwise the marriage might never take place!

One morning Vicky and her fiancée drove up to Madame Tussaud's. They had come to inspect their effigies in wax; the portrait model of the Princess being dressed in light blue flounced silk, ornamented with lace and pearls, and that of the Prince in the tall-capped fusilier uniform of the Prussian

Guard. Mr. Mayerl, the eminent photographer of Argyll Place, Regent street, was honoured by a visit from His Royal Highness of Prussia, accompanied by the Princess. 'After passing through Mr. Mayerl's interesting exhibition of photographs of distinguished ladies and gentlemen,' the Prince was carefully posed seated next his fiancée for a full-length portrait. Mr. Mayerl was happy in producing 'a remarkably fine and characteristic likeness,' which was to take first place in the family album which the couple began to form as soon as they were married.

Vicky had a serious accident in June. The Prince was still with the family at Windsor when it happened. Vicky's cool conduct when in great pain deserves recording for it throws light on her character. She was seated at her desk putting lighted sealing wax to a letter. Burning wax splashed on her muslin sleeve. Her right arm was enveloped in flame. Behind her Alice was taking a music lesson at the piano. Miss Hilyard, the English governess, and Mrs. Anderson were in the room. They tore up the hearth rug and smothered the flaming muslin. Vicky got to her feet, very pale. A terrible burn ran down her arm.

"Send for Papa," she said quietly. "Do not tell Mama till he has been told."

Fritz returned to Prussia and the year passed uneventfully. 1857 was Vicky's last unmarried year. It was to be a tense year for her, full of stirring scenes and emotional farewells. When Her Majesty opened Parliament in May she showed more nervousness than ever before. She had to request that a marriage provision 'suitable to the dignity of the Crown and the honour of the country' should be voted for her daughter, the Princess Royal.

The amount suggested was a dowry of £40,000 and an annuity of £8000.

It was suspected that the projected marriage was not looked upon entirely with favour.

Vicky was the first of the family to be offered up before the Commons in this way. As it was obvious that the reception of this first request would set a precedent in regard

to the marriage portions of the remaining members of the large family, the question was broached with trepidation. The Commons were quite agreeable to the proposed portion. They had expected to be asked for a bigger grant.

His Royal Highness Prince Frederick William landed at Dover from the South-Eastern steam packet, *Princess Maud*, on the sunny afternoon of June 10th for his presentation to the British public. The pier heads of the Admiralty pier were black with spectators. Major-General Wilde, from Buckingham Palace, and the Prussian attaché escorted the Prince to his special train. The train took him to Windsor, where he found the family in residence.

Next day Her Majesty had decided to honour Ascot races with her presence. At half-past twelve the Royal party swept out of the main gates at Windsor in eleven carriages with a crowd of outriders in scarlet liveries. In the first carriages the spectators saw Her Majesty, the Princess Royal, the Duchess of Cambridge, and His Royal Highness the Prince of Prussia. 'He was dressed like a young Englishman in compliment to the people among whom he had come to seek a bride. There is something about an English hat,' writes the eye-witness, 'with its small, flat brim, which pronounces its nationality far and wide, and an unmistakable specimen was selected by the Prince for his début. He also wore blue check cravats, which English country gentlemen occasionally affect. The Prince seems pleased with the slightest mark of courtesy, and was quick to acknowledge it.'

The London theatre managers found that they were going to have a boom season, for one play after another began to draw big audiences, after the Royal Family with the Prince of Prussia had paid it a visit.

Fritz attended the christening of the Princess Beatrice in Jordan water at Buckingham Palace chapel on June 16th, where his admiration for his fiancée, whose gleaming hair was crowned with a wreath of real roses, was especially marked.

His first important public appearance was at the Crystal

Palace, at Sydenham, at the performance of the Grand Oratorio, *Judas Maccabæus*, during the Handel Festival. He arrived in the first of nine carriages with an escort of Light Dragoons, having received a continual ovation all the way from 'well-dressed crowds,' which brought tears to his eyes. They passed through the Queen's private entrance and collected in procession in the State apartments, 'decorated with the most rare and beautiful exotics.' Her Majesty led the procession into the hall on the arm of her future son-in-law. It must have been an effective entry, for all the ladies in the procession were in black satin with white crêpe bonnets.

The vast assembly 'rose at them,' in the words of a contemporary newspaper man. The Princess Royal and her father, who sat side by side, delighted music enthusiasts by beating time with their music books, as they continually conversed during the music, supposedly about the beauties of Handel. It was noticed that Her Majesty, after casting some glances at her august husband and her eldest daughter, also began to beat time with her music book, and that Prince Frederick William, while continuing to engage her in animated talk, thereupon did likewise.

The engaged Royal couple collected applauding crowds in Rotten Row when they took their morning ride and their evening drive, always suitably accompanied. Toward the end of the month His Royal Highness of Prussia, with Prince Albert and Bertie, travelled by train to Manchester to receive the freedom of the city. The Mayor and Corporation received the Prince at the Town Hall. Frederick William made his first public speech in English. He did Mr. Perry credit, for he spoke 'with only a faint trace of foreign accent.' H.R.H.'s speech was handed to him with a bow by Count Moltke, after he had nodded his head in vehement approval of the high sentiments expressed in the speech of Welcome.

In view of events to come, the last words of Prince Frederick William's speech need recording. "I hope that God's blessing may rest upon this union," he said. "To secure the happiness of the Princess Royal will be the dearest duty of my life. I sincerely rejoice with you in the prospect

of this union drawing still closer for the future the ties of friendship happily existing between Prussia and this great nation."

On the evening of the great State Ball on July 2nd the front of Buckingham Palace was black with people, gathered to watch the nobility trundle into the forecourt in their caparisoned ancestral coaches. Most notable of all was the magnificent reception and ball given for Her Majesty, the Royal Family, and H.R.H. of Prussia at the Prussian Legation at Carlton House Terrace.

The remarkable illumination rivalled the Coronation in the Queen's estimation. "Around the three sides of the mansion, more especially the front facing Pall Mall, it was beautifully illuminated with variegated lamps, arranged in Corinthian columns with festoons, the chief front exhibiting the Royal Arms and initials of the Queen and sovereign house of Prussia with national standards of both countries. At least fifty thousand lamps were employed in the illuminations. It is needless to say that the display was instrumental in congregating a very large number of persons."

The new Prussian Minister and his wife, Count and Countess Bernstoff, received the Royal guests at the entrance and conducted them to the crimson and gilt throne, rising above the cluster of crimson and gilt chairs at one end. So that the heat of the summer ballroom should not inconvenience Her Majesty, all the windows had been removed, complete with sashes, and light drapery had been hung across the openings. At the *recherché* supper, announced at midnight, Her Majesty, on the arm of the Prussian Minister, Countess Bernstoff and Prince Albert, and the affianced pair led the way to the glittering supper-room, 'followed by a distinguished and limited number of the visitors.'

Frederick William went back to Berlin to find the shop windows full of cheap plaster busts of himself and the Princess Royal. On the whole a better spirit seemed to prevail in the capital. Excessive curiosity about the Princess Royal among the Berliners high and low—especially among the ladies—brought Prince Frederick unexpected

popularity and something more than frigid courtesies, even from the stiff-necked *Junker fraus*. The fact that this was a true love match roused immense wonder. Many people shook their heads. Such a phenomenon was unheard of among Continental Royalty. It was even to be deplored. It would stop the Prince from discovering for himself the traditional brilliant mistress of the Hohenzollerns, such an invaluable asset to political intriguers behind the Eagle Throne.

Count Moltke, the A.D.C., was able to tell his wife that he had no doubt at all about this being a pure love match. One morning he walked into Prince Frederick William's room and found him reading a forty-page letter from the Princess Royal! As he remarked caustically: "How the news must have accumulated!" He had only left England a few days and he was to return to Windsor for the Princess's seventeenth—her coming-of-age—birthday, but the cynical A.D.C. was a witness that further letters of similar calibre came from England and that the Prince's replies, though not so long, were at least amply satisfying. Perhaps Vicky was already discussing something more than love with her husband-to-be.

Although Prince Frederick William had been a personal success in England, the Prussian match was still unpopular. Any Prussian who read the London newspapers was bitterly offended, and with cause. Fierce Prussian pride, stung by these insults, caused a high-placed clique in Berlin to take up the cudgels. A demand from the Wilhelmstrasse reached Balmoral with the devastating shock of a bomb-shell. Her Majesty could not have been more astounded and outraged if a footman had jumped upon the dinner-table. The letter from the Prussian Foreign Minister announced that it was a custom for the Hohenzollerns (that 'paltry German dynasty') to celebrate their marriages in Berlin, and that, upon due consideration, the Minister of His Majesty the King of Prussia had to request that the Princess Royal of England should conform to this custom.

Speechless with rage, Her Majesty sailed from the room,

seized a pen with shaking hands, and wrote immediately to Lord Clarendon, who had forwarded the Prussian ultimatum.

'The Queen *never* could consent to it,' she scrawled, 'for both public and private reasons, and the assumption of its being *too much* for a Prince Royal of Prussia to come over to marry the *Princess Royal of Great Britain* in England is too *absurd*, to say the least. The Queen must say that there never was even the *shadow* of a *doubt* on *Prince Frederick William's* part as to *where* the marriage should take place, and she suspects this to be mere gossip of the Berliners. Whatever may be the usual practice of Prussian Princes, it is not *every* day that one of them marries the daughter of the Queen of England. The question, therefore, must be considered as settled and closed.'

It was. Had it not been, Queen Victoria was quite capable of calling off the match. There were moments when even beloved Albert was helpless in the presence of his wife.

VIII

Prince Frederick William was with his fiancée again in November. At seven o'clock on the morning of the coming-of-age birthday he had the privilege of being summoned to stand beside her at her bedroom window—suitably chaperoned—to watch Mr. Tutton lead the Horse Guards band up to the Terrace below, where he proceeded to serenade Her Royal Highness with a chorale and reveille, introducing the Morning Hymn. No sooner had Mr. Tutton bowed to and saluted the bedroom window and strutted away with his gilded bandsmen than the bells of the Chapel Royal broke into a merry peal. That was the signal to every church in Windsor. All day until sunset the Windsor bellringers worked in relays at pealing their bells. Before breakfast the men of the 2nd Fusilier Guards marched into the Castle quadrangle and gave 'nine hearty cheers for the Princess Royal.' After breakfast the affianced pair stood behind Her Majesty in the middle of a hollow square of the Fusilier Guards in the quadrangle, while four heroes of the Indian

Mutiny stepped forward for the Queen to pin the V.C. upon their breasts. The remainder of the day was occupied with a great family gathering.

A few days later Prince Frederick William, with the Princess Royal, attended the Opening of Parliament by Her Majesty. He was later to describe this event as the most unforgettable of his English experiences. The eye-witness account of the occasion given in *An Anecdotal Life of the Princess Royal*, the souvenir pamphlet on sale at the time of the marriage, catches so perfectly the atmosphere of the day that the account is too good to be missed.

‘After the peers had nearly all entered, and when the peeresses were beginning to grow impatient, the authoritative gentleman in black who is the awe and terror of even that distinguished group, walked down the floor and directed the ladies on each side to take off their light shawls and cloaks. They looked at him anxiously and obeyed with the utmost implicitness. In a few seconds not a neck or a shoulder was covered.

‘The next sensation was occasioned by the entry of Prince Frederick William of Prussia. His Royal Highness came in alone, and all rose. The rustling of the dresses was one of the most musical sounds imaginable. It was like the sound of the wind blowing through the branches of an avenue of trees. The young Prince avoided facing the numberless eyes and opera glasses directed upon his person and turned to the Turkish Ambassador, who was near him. Perhaps His Royal Highness had never talked so long a time with a Turk. The British peeresses discussed him with enjoyable humour; but the young Prince soon contrived to sit at the side of the Ambassador’s “square,” from which position he was not to be easily quizzed.

‘The next general rising was for Her Royal Highness the Princess Royal, whom I never saw looking so charming. She was dressed in a low black dress and a wreath of diamonds round her forehead. She sat with her back to the company, facing the Throne. Then, minutes later, and a door opened at the side, through which we could

hear the agreeable strains of distant music, and could see a long vista of nodding plumes and scarlet uniforms ; everybody in the Chamber rose and the Royal party walked slowly in. The Queen bowed and every lady, as well as her position would permit, bowed, too. When the Queen was seated on the Throne, and her footstool placed under her feet by a kneeling peer, the scene was one of singular gorgeousness and brilliancy. The Queen looked far better on the Throne than she does even in the opera box. Her dress, or robe, which seemed like a heavy white garment, with long, broad stripes of gild down to the borders, became her well, and her countenance looked healthy and cheerful.

' There was pause of five minutes, during which scarcely the faintest sound could be heard. If one could but have seen that sight in the days of childhood, before the dear belief in fairies and in " halls of dazzling light " in caverns beneath the sea had been destroyed by a cruel world—how complete the illusion would have been ! But not a child was there. I half-looked for one, that I might watch the impression—but, there was no human being present who believed in fairies ! '

Preparations were now going forward apace for the wedding. It was to take place on January 28th. The private apartments at Windsor were noisy with over-excited girlish laughter and many tears were being shed.

The public read eagerly that the Queen would wear peach-coloured moire with a velvet train at the ceremony, that the Princess Royal had herself designed the dresses for the eight unmarried peeresses who were to be her bridesmaids, that the ' poor girls ' of the Shamballymore Female Industrial School, Ireland, had been filled with ' a degree of commendable pride ' by a command for two pairs of embroidered sleeves and collars ' for the approaching nuptials,' that the whole population of the Emerald Isle was delighted that the Princess Royal had ordered for the trousseau from Dublin industries an emerald-green poplin gown richly tissueed with gold shamrocks.

There was disappointment and some resentment both in Berlin and London at the news that the wedding was to be celebrated, not in Westminster Abbey, but in the cramped and gloomy Chapel Royal, St. James's. Owing to the widespread distress among the poor of the country, the Queen considered that outlay for a Westminster Abbey ceremony would be unjustified. That meant that the ceremony would be a private one or, at least, one shared between the Royal Family, the *haute noblesse*, and the foreign guests. However, the public were in a small measure appeased when they learned that ten gentlemen of the Press were to be admitted, on condition that they wore black. Prince Albert took the bridegroom-to-be and the whole Royal Family to St. James's to see the Forecourt, where the band plays and guard is changed. This he had covered over and set out with gilt chairs for the convenience of the nobility who could not be accommodated in the Chapel. Inside the Chapel he commended to them the new iron galleries for a hundred and fifty spectators, supported on slender deep blue columns with gilded pedestals. The rich gold plate had been specially set out in gleaming profusion on the new crimson velvet altar cloth.

Prince Frederick William returned to Berlin for Christmas. It was rather a sad Christmastide for the family at Windsor. The first parting was about to take place. Prince Albert was noticeably melancholy. Bertie seemed to get on his nerves. The Queen was apt to be caught weeping.

It is a fitting moment to see Vicky as those around her saw her on the threshold of her marriage. It is not difficult to understand why Frederick William was in love with her. One who knew her has described her eyes as the most striking feature about her, for the irises were green, reminding the beholder of the sea on a sunny day, and the whites caught the attention by their strange shimmer. When she smiled she displayed her beautiful teeth and her smile could bewitch everyone but a Prussian reactionary. Her shining hair parted off the brow, her naturally soft and bright complexion, her slim figure emphasized by the swelling bustle, completed

the picture. Not the least fascinating of her characteristics was said to be that, whatever language she employed, she spoke with a foreign accent which sounded especially attractive because the tone of her soft, clear voice rivalled that of the Queen.

Vicky's Household in Prussia was to be all Prussian, with the exception of a lady secretary and reader, the Hon. Mary Seymour, daughter of the Equerry to Prince Albert, and a Coburger, Ernest Stockmar, son of Baron Stockmar, who was to be her Treasurer (and adviser!). Miss Seymour had been given her post at the invitation of Prince Frederick William, but he had been doubtful about the appointment of Ernest Stockmar. Not that he felt any disapproval on personal grounds, but 'old Stocky,' who had had a finger in many international political pies and regarded the private apartments of England's palaces as his second home, was anathema to the reactionaries of Prussia. However, the Queen and Prince Albert had been so pressing about this that he had ignored his better judgment. The Chamberlain and the Mistress of the Robes were to be the grim Count and Countess Perpoucher. The two ladies-in-waiting were entirely pleasant creatures, Countess Marie zu Lyman and Wally von Hohenthal, but they were quite characterless enough to be made useful spies by any scheming person. These two had already arrived, by invitation of the Queen, and were getting to know their duties and the ways of their young mistress.

In January all the Princes and Princesses of Prussia and the other foreign guests began to reach London. The ladies had to be looked after by the Queen, but the men were collected and taken up to Balmoral by Prince Albert and Bertie. Here they were set to deer-stalking under the charge of the gentlemen of the Household, whom they scandalized by the savage brutality of their ideas of sport. Meanwhile, Prince Albert hurried back to a chaotic Buckingham Palace, to face the problem of fitting a very large number of mutually-jealous people into 'a very limited space.' He told a friend that, if he achieved the impossible and lodged

them all, he thought he might try a tour as professional magician.

On January 15th the Court were to leave Windsor for Buckingham Palace. That morning the Queen and Vicky inspected the 'honeymoon suite' at Windsor. The Red Drawing Room was to be the sitting-room for the newly-weds. According to the Queen's diary, she was 'quite agitated' at the sight of the specially prepared rooms. Following the precedent of her own marriage, she had decided that the honeymoon should be brief—almost non-existent. Vicky and Fritz could have *one* clear day to themselves. On the following day the Court and the guests would come down to join them from London.

The entire wedding party was gathered at Buckingham Palace on the 19th. Ninety persons sat down to dinner at the Palace in the evening. Fritz's mother and father were there and with them a remarkable collection of petty German Royalty and high courtiers. Uncle Leopold had come over from Belgium, as platitudinous as ever. Old Baron Stockmar buzzed about with inquisitive cunning and was frowned upon by the Prussian element. 'Such a houseful—such bustle and excitement!' the Queen wrote in her diary that night before she went to bed.

They all went to Her Majesty's Theatre the next evening. A command performance of *Macbeth* was followed by an hilarious farce, *Twice Killed*, which kept them in their seats till midnight. Such a dazzling regiment of Royalty made a thrilling spectacle for those commoners who were able to gain admittance. The Queen did not miss this aspect of the evening in her diary. 'We made,' she declared, 'a wonderful row of royalties.' There was a State ball, a gala performance of *The Rose of Castile*, and a State banquet, after which Mr. Leslie's celebrated choir sang.

Fritz arrived from Berlin on the morning of Saturday the 23rd, and was instantly wafted off with the guests to watch Mr. Rarey exhibit his infallible system of training wild horses. The time was drawing short, Sunday was Vicky's last unmarried day. The Queen was now referring constantly

in her diary to her eldest daughter as 'poor dear Vicky.' After breakfast Her Majesty directed the arranging of the wedding presents in the large drawing-room. It quite reminded her of her own wedding. She fetched Vicky and Fritz and brought them in. Fritz had immediately to cross the room to admire 'the three fine candelabra' set apart with a look of challenge on a table by themselves. They were his gift from the Queen and Prince Albert. Vicky and the Queen, meanwhile, were bending over Fritz's pearls—the largest the Queen had ever seen. 'Vicky was in ecstasies, quite startled, and Fritz delighted.'

It was time for morning church. Before they set out Vicky gave her mother a brooch with a strand of her hair in it and, throwing her arms about her neck, cried: "Oh, Mama, I hope to be worthy to be your child!" As Vicky was to write to her every day, the mother felt pretty confident of making her daughter abide by that sentiment.

That evening was far more gloomy than the normal Sunday evening in the Royal homes. Bed-time came—they had put it off as long as possible—and the Queen and Prince Albert walked with Vicky to her bedroom. 'She was much overcome.' Outside the door she embraced her mother and she clung to 'her truly adored Papa with much tenderness.'

January 25th, the Wedding Day, dawned. The Queen told herself in the diary that it was the second most eventful day of her life, 'as regards feelings.' She felt just as she did on her own wedding morning, 'only more nervous.' Vicky came in while she was dressing. The Queen was deeply relieved to hear that her daughter had slept better than of late. Out of a drawer she took a little book called *The Bridal Offering* and gave it to Vicky.

The morning wore on. The bells of London were pealing. It was a crisp, sparkling morning. The guests were marshalled, a scintillating array of rainbow uniforms and orders, pomaded whiskers, diamonds, rich tight bosoms, and swaying satin crinolines. The shining carriages were drawing up before the garden entrance. Meanwhile, in Her Majesty's

boudoir, the Court photographer was adjusting the tripods of his apparatus and directing the footman in the correct placing of three chairs. The Queen and Prince Albert entered with Vicky in her bridal gown. They seated themselves obediently, assuming the attitudes suggested by the photographic artist. Vicky was composed and radiant. Her father was grim and impatient. Her Majesty had to wipe her eyes constantly. She confessed that, in her opinion, the reason why, in the daguerreotype, she came out so much more indistinctly than the other two was because she was trembling so violently. Prince Albert and Uncle Leopold, in Field-Marshal's scarlet, and with batons, left for St. James's in the first carriage with the two eldest boys. In the next carriage rode 'Laddle' and the three girls, in pink satin. In the third carriage were the three boys in Highland costume. Her Majesty followed next, with the Princess Royal sitting facing her. Whatever the public had been urged by the newspapers to think about the Prussian match, they appeared delirious with enthusiasm as the bride and her mother swept past them.

When they reached the dressing-room at St. James's Palace there were Prince Albert and Uncle Leopold waiting for them, with the eight bridesmaids in white tulle with wreaths and bouquets of pink roses and white heather. 'Pam' (Lord Palmerston) was waiting outside with the Sword of State. He led Her Majesty across the Forecourt and into the Chapel Royal. The two smallest boys walked on either side of the Queen. The three girls walked behind. The Queen records in her diary that everybody told her this spectacle 'had a most touching effect.'

The description in the Royal diary of events in the Chapel is vivid.

'The drums and trumpets played marches and the organ played others as the procession approached and entered. There was a pause between each, but not a very long one, and the effect was thrilling and striking as you heard the music gradually coming nearer and nearer. Fritz looked pale and much agitated but behaved with the greatest

self-possession, bowing to us, and then kneeling down in a most devotional manner. Then came the bride's procession and our darling Flower looking very touching and lovely, with such an innocent, confident and serious expression, her veil hanging back over her shoulders, walking between her beloved father and dearest Uncle Leopold, who had been at her christening and confirmation.

'My last fear of being overcome vanished on seeing Vicky's quiet, calm manner. It was beautiful to see her kneeling with Fritz, their hands joined, and the train borne by eight young ladies, who looked like a cloud of maidens hovering round her as they knelt near her. Dearest Albert took her by the hand to give her away. The music was very fine, the Archbishop very nervous; Fritz spoke very plainly, Vicky too. The Archbishop omitted some of the passages.'

The service finished, the Queen left her seat to kiss Vicky. Vicky kissed Grandmama Kent, the Queen kissed Fritz, Vicky kissed the Prince and Princess of Prussia. The Queen followed her. Then everybody shook hands. The Queen's heart was very full. Vicky did not shed one tear. The strains of the 'Wedding March' filled the Chapel Royal. The bridal couple walked out hand in hand. They all proceeded to the Throne Room to watch the signing of the register. In history a page had turned.

IX

Vicky and Fritz drove away to entrain for Windsor. At Windsor, long before the Royal special left London, the station yard was a heaving mass of Eton boys. When the carriage from the Castle drew up at the station entrance a flood of boys surrounded the protesting postilions. Loosening the traces, they ran horses and riders away through the mob. Etonians took their places. Then the train jolted alongside the platform and hundreds of battered stove-pipe hats whizzed skywards. The air quivered with

the shouting. Fritz was quite nervous as he followed Vicky into the carriage. Hardly a policeman was to be seen nor any troops. Fritz was remembering the Berlin revolution of '48. The Etonians in the traces took the strain. They were on their way. Soon they had swayed and jerked through Windsor main entrance, where the saluting Guard had been completely swamped in stove-pipe hats.

They descended in the Forecourt. While Guardsmen and attendants were driving out the Eton boys they walked to their suite. In the brocaded Red Drawing Room they stood looking out at the Long Walk. They were alone, almost for the first time in their lives. They went and sat down on the red sofa, and held hands, 'almost too shy to talk to one another.' That is the testimony of Vicky herself. No further record exists of Vicky and Fritz until the Queen, Prince Albert, and the Court arrived at Windsor on the 27th.

Fritz was invested with the Garter. They all returned to Buckingham Palace on the 29th. In the evening they attended a gala performance of *The Rivals*, followed by the knockabout farce, *The Spitalfields Weaver*. The National Anthem was played three times—twice before the curtain went up and once after the finale, each time with two verses added to it which had been specially composed for the occasion. Fritz led Vicky to the front of the Royal Box to acknowledge the thunder of applause.

Next evening the bridesmaids, their parents, and Vicky's girl friends came to the Palace. Fritz went out into the street with his A.D.C.s to see the town. In the Palace the girls danced together. Their fathers were the only men present. That was the last light-hearted event at Buckingham Palace. Next day a very tense atmosphere had set in. The parting that was now only forty-eight hours ahead rose like a nightmare before Vicky, chiefly because she was going to be separated from her father. "I think it will kill me to take leave of dear Papa," she sobbed to her mother, and she meant it. The Queen was wandering about the rooms with a look positively of agony on her face, Fritz spent much of the last day in conversation with Prince Albert. The philoso-

pher did not much show his feelings except in his eyes ; besides, he had a great deal to talk over with Fritz. The King of Prussia would certainly not last long. Fritz's father was past middle age. It might not be so very long before Prince Albert would be writing to Vicky, the Queen of Prussia.

The morning of departure was upon them. An icy wind howled round the Palace. Outside the snowflakes rushed swiftly by the windows to the white gardens. ' A dreadful moment and a dreadful day,' the Queen entered in her diary. ' Such sickness came over me, real heartache, when I thought of our dearest child being gone, and for so long—all, all being over ! ' She could not bear to go near Vicky's corridor.

Mary of Cambridge, afterwards Duchess of Teck and mother of Queen Mary, reached the Palace at eleven-thirty with her mother. They intended to wait downstairs to say good-bye. They were fetched to the Queen's Closet. They entered. There were the Queen, Vicky, and a circle of female relations weeping unrestrainedly. Prince Albert came to summon Vicky and his wife. Another daguerreo-type was to be taken. The photograph is still in existence. In the portrait taken just before the wedding Vicky was cool and radiant. This time there can be no doubt that her face is blotched and disfigured with a fit of weeping. She is hardly recognizable. All this, as Mary of Cambridge remarks, was ' a sad, a trying scene. We all accompanied her to the carriage and, after bidding her adieu, Mama and I hurried to one of the front rooms to see her drive up the Mall.'

The snow was still sweeping down, but they passed with chattering teeth in an open carriage through the excited crowds in the Mall, in Fleet Street, Cheapside, and on London Bridge. Vicky was firm about the open carriage, though her mother wanted her to have it closed. The unpleasant ordeal was good practice for Vicky for there was much more ominous weather ahead in Berlin in every sense of the word. Behind the carriage of the bridal couple followed a second open vehicle, bearing Prince Albert, Bertie, and Alfred, who were to accompany Vicky to

Gravesend. Sorry though the two boys were to see Vicky go, they were sick of the whole business. The open carriage and the snow were the limit, they thought. Prince Albert sat silent, looking drawn and ill.

Outside Barclay and Perkins's brewery stood the tough draymen in their red nightcaps and white smocks. The carriage drew level.

"Look-ee, Fritz, you be kind to our Princess Royal—else we'll have her back, d'ye see!" bellowed one of them through cupped hands.

Frederick William acknowledged him laughingly. After a doleful journey they came to Gravesend. Prince Albert was still outwardly serene, but could find little to say. At the pierhead the *Victoria and Albert* plunged menacingly, while the snow piled up about her gilded fittings. They were to leave immediately. They reached the swaying gangway. Vicky threw herself on her father's breast. Then Prince Albert began to weep unashamedly. The boys stamped about behind, cold and uncomfortable. Soon the *Victoria and Albert* was making out to the Channel through the snow haze, and Vicky and Fritz had vanished from the dismal decks. The Victorian vignette is ended; the Prussian drama is ahead.

In London *The Times* was prophetically gloomy. They called the newspaper 'The Thunderer' in those days. What *The Times* said on Monday, the Continent said on Tuesday.

'We only trust and pray,' said *The Times*, 'that the policy of England and Prussia may never present any painful alternatives to the Princess now about to leave our shores; that she will never be called on to forget the land of her birth; and that, should the occasion ever occur, she may have the wisdom to render what is due both to her new and her old country. There is no European State but what changes and is still susceptible of change, nor is this change wholly by any internal law of development. We influence one another. England, indeed, has ever been jealous of foreign influence and she would be the last to repudiate the honour of influencing her neighbours. . . .'

Doubtless Prince Albert read those words, but it is certain from his letters to Vicky that the fullness of the dangers, pitfalls, and obstacles inherent in the Anglo-Prussian alliance never troubled the serenity of his soaring mind, bent on the Greater German Utopia under the auspices of Prussia and of his eldest daughter.

PART THREE

THE ALIEN

I

VICKY and Fritz spend the night of February 2nd in Antwerp. Next morning Uncle Leopold is waiting for them in Brussels. The Princess enchants all with her grace and gaiety, despite her bleeding heart. She has received the first letter from her father.

‘My heart was very full,’ he had written, ‘when yesterday you leaned your forehead on my breast to give free vent to your tears. I am not of a demonstrative nature and therefore you can hardly know how dear you have always been to me and what a void you have left behind in my heart ; yet not in my heart, for there assuredly you will abide henceforth, as till now you have done, but in my daily life, which is evermore reminding my heart of your absence.’

Next evening Vicky is nearing the place where she is to spend her first night on German soil. Ahead, thrusting up into the blackness, is the huge glowing shape of Cologne Cathedral, its every line traced as if by a fiery pencil on the sky. On the 5th, at midday, they alight at Magdeburg. They visit the great Cathedral. As they come out of the main door women break past the police and the Royal couple are rescued, breathless and smothered in flowers, from a delirious sea of tousled femininity. Vicky drives through the crowds to the station holding together her velvet tartan gown, ripped down the back and gaping open at the shoulders.

At Wittenburg, next morning, girls in national costume enter the Royal carriage and lay on the seat an immense

apple tart. Wittenburg is famous for its pastry. They are drawing near to Potsdam now ; that awe-inspiring, breathtaking, almost legendary stronghold of Prussian Royalty. The awe of Potsdam, with its palaces and personalities, about which Vicky has heard so much, has already taken possession of her as she glances restlessly from the carriage windows. Everything is strange, different, aloof. There is something cold in the air and it is not just the bitter coldness of the atmosphere. Nor is this feeling called up by the faces of the deputations at the endless stations where they stop, for all these people are smiling and with their arms full of flowers. Yet there is something about these sober, bowing dignitaries with their square-shaped heads, which suggests that they would be happier in a gleaming *Pickelhaube* than in a top-hat. There is something hard behind the sharp blue eyes that do not smile. It is the grim, tense, pitiless spirit of Prussia which is in the air.

A few stations before Potsdam a huge form blocks the doorway of the Royal carriage. It is ' Papa ' Wrangel, the great Marshal who bore his regimental colour against Napoleon at Leipzig, hero of the Wars of Liberation. The colossal septuagenarian congratulates them in a hoarse bellow. Stroking his dangling whiskers he gloats over the youthful slimness of Vicky. Soon he is going to start calling her his ' Angel.' He is a great friend of Fritz. He has decided to travel with them to Potsdam. The Marshal is short-sighted. Lost in animated conversation with Vicky, he tosses aside the tails of his military coat and sits down in the Wittenburg apple tart. Roaring with delight, he presents his mottled posterior to the Princess, who wipes it with her handkerchief, and weeping helplessly, summons her ladies with towels.

It is midday as the train thunders across the long railway bridge and the towers of Potsdam rise beyond the river. The Crown Prince of Prussia is on the platform to meet his son and daughter-in-law. Bells are pealing, guns roaring, and all the way to the Old Schloss the route is lined by the Trade Companies. A stirring procession sets out. First ride the

Scarlet Hussars led by Carl, the terrible Red Prince, who boxed his wife's ears five minutes after she had borne him his third daughter in succession ; nor was that the end of his fascinating iniquity. Then comes the Master of the Horse in his green and golden coat. A squadron of the giant white Garde-du-Corps in their flashing brazen helmets precede Vicky and Fritz.

Augusta, Crown Princess of Prussia, awaits them at the foot of the great marble steps of the Old Schloss. Behind her clusters a whispering mass of Hohenzollern relations. "Welcome to Potsdam!" they all shout with the voice of a trained chorus. The sun shines brightly to lighten a little for Vicky the ordeal of introduction, but she has never known such cold. The Trades begin to pass before the Schloss with their banners and emblems. There is a grand reception for the notabilities and the stiff-necked garrison.

On Sunday morning Vicky attends the Garrison Kirche with Fritz and drives in shivering state through the Royal parks. At night they appear at the gala performance of Spontini's *Vestalin*, the customary piece performed on ceremonial occasions. On Monday morning they set out for Berlin. The carriage is closed, for the wind cuts like a knife ; but Vicky has given orders that the roof is to be removed before they enter the city gates. She and her ladies are in low-backed dresses in accordance with Prussian etiquette. In the Berlin streets she is going to discard her mantle and brave the blast for the benefit of her new countrymen.

Bellevue Palace lies just outside the Brandenburg Gate and here the *cortège* halts. His Majesty the King has defied doctors' orders and waits with Queen Elizabeth at the Palace entrance to greet the bride.

'How delightful that thou art here at last,' the haggard King keeps repeating vacantly to Vicky. He returns to embrace her again and again, for he cannot think of anything else to do. Now and again he taps his head and sighs. Queen Elizabeth is almost as frigid as the weather. His Majesty drives away to the peace of Charlottenburg. The *cortège* reaches the Brandenburg Gate, where the City orphans are

strewing the road with flowers. This happy task was to have been carried out by two hundred daughters of the best families in Berlin, dressed in bridal white, but, the weather being too severe, the municipal orphans have taken their place. Marshal Wrangel sits his charger in the shadow of the great gate. Already he is telling all and sundry that the Princess is his 'Angel.'

The carriage roof is lowered. Her Royal Highness and her ladies discard their mantles. The cruel wind rushes at them through the archway. They sweep through to receive the acclaim of the Berliners. At two o'clock they reach the banks of the River Spree. Prince Frederick William is seen pointing out to his bride the towers of Kronprinsen Residenz, the Old Berlin Schloss beside the Museum Platz, their winter home. Flowery garlands deck the sculptured figures on the bridge spanning the sparkling river, and beyond, towering over them like a menacing fate as the *cortège* streams across, rises the colossal bronze figure of Frederick the Great, flashing fiery defiance in the golden sunlight. The same Hohenzollerns are gathered on the steps in the courtyard of the Old Schloss. They have driven from Potsdam by a different route. The same 'Welcome' chorus rings out theatrically. The figure who stands in front of them this time is a surprise to Vicky. It is old Queen Elizabeth. She is as chilly as ever in outward person, but perhaps there is some softness in her heart for the lonely English stranger. She has hurried in from Bellevue Palace by the short way to welcome her at the door of her home. Yet the old lady's harsh tones are as disagreeable as her expression as she speaks after brushing the Princess's cheeks with her cold lips.

"Are you not frozen?" asks the Queen.

Vicky smiles. "I have only one warm place left. That is my heart!"

The gentle remark startles the Queen. It has gone home. The hardness vanishes from her wrinkled face. The words have been overheard. The Hohenzollerns are so taken aback they gaze round speechless with approval. If only Vicky, Princess Royal of England, could have gone through her life

uttering such masterpieces of tact the history of Germany, indeed the history of the world, might have been different. On such trivialities as this great issues may depend. Unhappily, this is the one perfectly judged remark accorded to the Princess Royal during the whole of her fateful life in Germany.

II

So the Princess Royal crossed the dismal hall of the Old Schloss. Relics of Waterloo and Quatre Bras rested on the mouldering walls. It was pregnant with the atmosphere of a dead age. Passing beneath the ill-dusted wings of the marble twin Victories which arched over the foot of the great stairway, she ascended to the draughty first landing, where the tall statue of Frederick William III frowned down out of the gloom on the decay amid which he had passed his life. Here Frederick William III had died. They said he was the genius of the Schloss. The place was impregnated with his memory. In the Schloss Prussians talked of the dead King in whispers, as if they feared he might hear them. The Schloss was believed to be haunted by his ghost. Nobody had lived there since his death and hardly a chair had been moved. The knick-knacks were still on many of the tables, as he had left them.

Here the Princess Royal was to spend her first married winter, the coldest and most uncomfortable she had ever spent, lightened only by the affection of her husband.

That night she gazed from the cold Schloss at the houses and buildings of Berlin blazing with illuminations. In all that welter of light, to which even the meanest house made its tiny contribution, there was one patch of blackness. It was caused by a large mansion which did not display a single light. No wonder passing Berliners stopped to stare and mutter. For this was the mansion of Milord and Milady Bloomfield—the *British Embassy*.

It was not the fault of the British Ambassador that the Embassy was unilluminated. Like all wealthy house-

holders in Berlin, he had arranged with the Gas Company to illuminate the mansion. Gas had never before been used for this purpose in Berlin, and by ill-luck the illumination system failed in the one house where it was expected to be most brilliant. Some Berliners who witnessed the sight of that darkened Embassy never forgot it. In after-years they began to say it was an ill-omen. In a few days the story of the unlighted British Embassy had gone round the city. It made a very unfortunate impression, for the reason was not known. Ever since the marriage had been announced the Berliners were aware that the English newspapers talked in half-contemptuous terms of Prussia. Could it be that the British Ambassador did not consider the Prussian marriage of enough importance to justify his illuminating his house?

The suite of rooms allotted to the Prince and Princess in the Old Schloss was that in which Frederick William III had died. The death chamber had been left undisturbed since the hour of the King's death. It was a family heirloom of the Hohenzollerns. On one side of the death chamber was the bedroom of the Prince and Princess. On the other was the Princess's boudoir. Every morning she passed through the stillness of the death chamber to the boudoir. Every night she was lighted with a lamp by her lady-in-waiting through the shadows of the death chamber to the bedroom. Every time she wished to change her dress during the day she crossed the threshold of the awful room.

The Kronprinzen suite had been richly decorated for them, but so dark were the rooms that the splendid decorations were wasted, even when the sun shone brightly outside. Draughts swept along the wide, gloomy corridors and under every door. Black passages, through which the wind came whistling from some unglazed window opening, led away into a grimy maze of forgotten rooms. There was no means of heating the corridors, of defeating the draughts. There was not a bath in the Schloss. The food arrived lukewarm from the distant kitchens. Clearly, the frequent demand for hot water was little understood by the servants. The drainage

system was non-existent. Even the rooms of the suite were warm only within a few feet of the fire-places.

The spirit of Frederick William III was not the only phantom believed to walk in this grim Schloss. Old servants talked of other ghosts, but especially of the famous 'White Lady,' the traditional doom of the Hohenzollerns. When the 'White Lady' walked in the Schloss some disaster came to the House Hohenzollern. Many years later the story was to be told of how the 'White Lady' was seen in the Old Schloss for the last time just before Vicky's son, Kaiser William II, fled into Holland for sanctuary in 1918.

The Princess herself used to tell the story of a strange experience during that first stormy winter at the Old Schloss. One evening, soon after her arrival, she was sitting by the fire in the boudoir with a lady-in-waiting. The lady was reading aloud and sitting at the side of the fire-place, so that the door of the death chamber was within her view. The room was full of dark places, for only the dancing light of the flames and a small reading-lamp illumined it.

The lady-in-waiting stopped reading. Glancing at her, the Princess froze with terror. Something was behind her back, for there was no misreading the glassy gaze of the lady which passed over the Princess's shoulder toward the door of the death chamber. Nor was the tensed attitude of her body natural. A ghastly silence followed.

"What's happened? Do you see anything?" the Princess ventured in nervous tones.

The lady's eyes met her mistress's.

"Nothing, ma'am," she said, rising and shutting the door of the death chamber.

The door into the death chamber was covered with blue silk to match the walls of the boudoir. The lady-in-waiting afterwards told the Princess that she had raised her eyes from the book and thought at first that the wall was moving behind her mistress. She realized that the door of the death chamber was slowly opening, as if an unseen hand held the handle on the other side.

This dreadful Schloss, with its draughts and its ghosts and

its lack of bathing facilities, was no happy environment for a girl-bride fresh from the hygienic and comfortable Royal homes of England; yet Vicky's letters home prove that in spite of this atmosphere of discomfort and in spite of the uncongenial and even frightening people she was daily having to mingle with, she was in a large measure happy. That was due to the tenderness of Prince Frederick William. In a way, that strange winter at the Old Schloss, which she was never to enter again, must in after years have seemed to her like the calm before the storm or, rather, perhaps, that period of broken weather and squalls before the storm burst.

Full of energy and ideas, the Princess began to set herself to the task of making the Schloss a habitable home. She did not consider it so, and she said as much. The Hohenzollerns were pained. The first matters to be tackled were baths, drains and stoves for heating the corridors and rooms. The official to be consulted before anything could be done was Count Redern, High Dopifer (Grand Master of the Royal Households). Even if Count Redern wished to make any alterations at the Old Schloss he could not do so without the King's permission. In any case, he was pained—indeed, shocked—to be summoned by the Princess and given what amounted almost to an order. Women in Prussia did not give orders, especially if they were Princesses. They agreed to alterations planned by their menfolk. Did His Royal Highness desire the alterations? His Royal Highness agreed to anything the Princess desired. He would approach the King.

"I do not think His Majesty will agree to the alterations, ma'am. He sets a very high value on the ancient splendour of the Schloss," said the High Dopifer with ponderous disapproval.

"You must agree, Count, that the Schloss is almost medieval in its arrangements. At home, at Windsor Castle, which is just as old, all our living rooms have been modernized."

Count Redern did not forget that the Princess had called *England* home. *Prussia* was her home. To the end of her

life Vicky never understood how she wounded Prussian pride by talking of England as home.

The request for a bath in the Old Schloss was the first one to be put to the King. At first he would not hear of it. Later in the day he recalled Count Redern. He ordered that a stone bath should be placed in one of the rooms adjoining the suite at the Schloss. This certainly had the shape and capacity of a bath, but no hot or cold water system was laid on. The hot water had to be brought in buckets. The bath was fairly broad-bottomed and was placed on the floor without any supports. It rocked whenever the bather moved in it. However hot the water it held, the floor of the bath was icy-cold. Prince Frederick William was sent to make a personal appeal to the King. His Majesty ordered a hot and cold water system to be installed. The Princess was delighted. She came home from some function on the day after the system had been installed. She met workmen carrying the new enamel bath out of the entrance of the Schloss. Others were removing the pipes. His Majesty had changed his mind, as he frequently did. A bath was incompatible with the old-world atmosphere of the Schloss. Eventually, by permission of His Majesty, Count Redern was instructed to reinstall the bath and hot water system.

Many similar aggravations faced the Princess. In the end, by perseverance, she added a great deal to the comfort of the Old Schloss, but not without arousing some ill-feeling. The ménage was beginning to take on a distinctly English character and Vicky was gently warned by her mother-in-law, Princess Augusta, that this fact was being noticed and commented upon at Court. Reluctantly, Vicky agreed to maintain the custom of dinner at two o'clock, in full evening dress, and cold meat supper with light sweets at ten o'clock, even when no guests were present.

As a girl Princess Augusta had been made to *tenez cercle*, a custom derived from the eighteenth-century French Court. It was most necessary for a Princess, especially in Prussia, to have something to say to everybody in a room, and the words must be perfectly appropriate to the character of the

person to whom they were addressed. Augusta had been made to walk round the garden and talk to the shrubs, each shrub being given a name and character beforehand. This had been a daily duty in the summer months ; in the winter she carried out the same performance with the chairs indoors. Half-laughingly, Vicky agreed to undergo the same exercise in the Old Schloss. It was a side of her training which had been totally overlooked both by the Queen and Prince Albert. Doubtless, her father, knowing the Prussian mentality, had advised her of the importance of the right word in the right place. But with an ardent and impetuous character like Vicky's advice was not enough. Vicky never learnt the art of weighing up a character and treating the owner accordingly. She always addressed everybody as she considered she would like to have been addressed herself.

Vicky wrote to her mother every day, a practice she was to continue until her death, and once a week she wrote a more serious letter to her father. In early days at Berlin Prince Albert was her real confidant. In the domestic circle she had only one complaint, other than those arising from the discomfort of the Old Schloss. Prince Frederick William had for many years been in the habit of taking a nightly stroll, unguarded, in the Berlin streets. In most things Vicky ruled her husband from the first, but, to her discontent, she could never break him of this.

At the Prussian Court the new Princess found herself in a strange, almost a fantastic, world. Deep down in her heart she was frightened. There was a soft glitter about English Court life. There was a hard glitter about the Prussian Court. A number of very aged men and women, survivors of the days of the Wars of Liberation and earlier, set the tone. The formality was barbarous. Beneath the surface ran an undercurrent of intrigue and envy. There were a number of beautiful women and several very bad men, of whom the Red Prince was the most notorious. This selfish and brutal soldier was of very uncertain moods. He was a dangerous duellist without mercy. He engaged in epic drinking bouts, from which he reappeared at Court only

half recovered. He was a danger to other men's wives. He was tolerated because he was a brilliant soldier; the most valuable attribute of which a Prussian junker could boast. Beautiful Princess Charles, the wife of the Red Prince, who was permanently deaf after the blow her husband had struck her after the birth of his third daughter, became a close friend of the Princess. Like Vicky, she was a clever artist. The numerous ladies-in-waiting at the Court appeared to be disciplined like grenadiers, but behind the scenes things were happening which would have scandalized old Queen Elizabeth.

First in this stern Court came the *plastdamen*, wives of the great junkers, who appeared only on ceremonial days. The *hofdamen*, the ladies-in-waiting, always attended the Queen and the Princesses. Elderly *hofdamen* were encyclopedias of monstrous etiquette. Their underlings feared them as recruits fear a brutal drill sergeant, and these martinets, if pious and straightlaced, as they frequently were in old age, were apt to be dubbed the 'Hallelujah Aunts.'

Vicky developed a cold soon after her arrival, and while attending a Court soirée she sneezed while standing near Queen Elizabeth's chair. The Queen beckoned to her, after looking at her hard. She hissed something into her ear in an undertone. Everybody knew what the Queen had said. She had told the Princess that in Prussia you do not sneeze in the presence of the Sovereigns. The Princess did not take the Queen very seriously, for she exclaimed quite loudly: "But I have a bad cold, ma'am."

"That makes no difference," snapped the Queen, very annoyed and no longer in quiet tones. "I'm sorry, ma'am. I did not know. We don't have customs like that in our Court at home," answered the Princess, a trifle pertly.

Many of the hearers were scandalized.

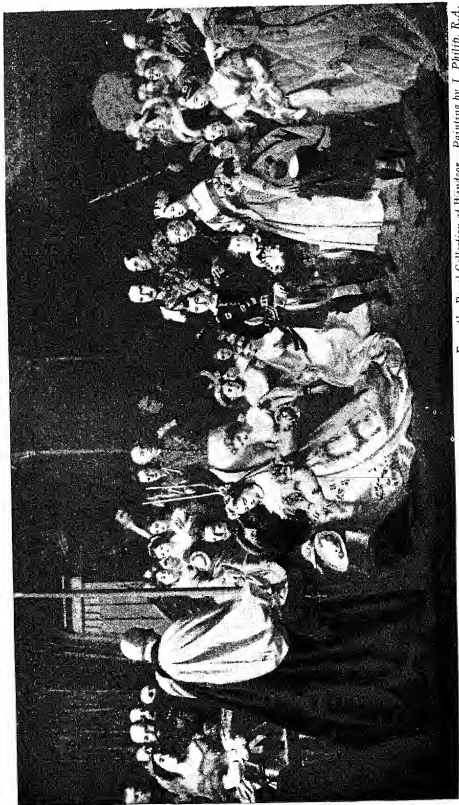
It had already been said of the Princess that when she came to the Prussian Court she was observed to 'freeze up' at the approach of a *reactionary*. Three-quarters of the persons at Court were passive reactionaries. It was the active reactionaries, the men about whom she had heard so much

that she considered dangerous to her dream of the future, and these she warned of her sentiments by treating them with suspicion and coolness. She quickly gave away the fact that she had a brilliant and active mind. She could not stop talking. She read all the Prussian newspapers and she talked politics: Liberal politics. If any great lady of Prussia had ideas on such matters she kept them to herself. Possibly, if she were clever enough and interested enough, she might lead her husband to her point of view in the privacy of the home circle, but publicly she had no views.

A Chicago journalist, Mr. Smalley, once wrote some words about the Princess which gave a remarkably vivid impression of her personality as it appeared to a stranger. He met her many years later, but his remarks fit very aptly here, for in the characteristics described the favourite daughter of the Prince Consort never changed.

'She talked,' says Smalley, 'with clearness, with energy, and almost apostolic fervour, her voice penetrating rather than melodious. Never for a moment did this dreamer's talk stop or grow sluggish. Carlyle summed up Macaulay in the phrase, "Flow on, thou shining river"; he might in a sardonic mood have done the same for this Princess. Judgment was not her strong point, nor was tact; if I am to say what was her strong point, I suppose it would be sincerity. Her gifts of mind were dazzling rather than sound; impulse was not always under control!'

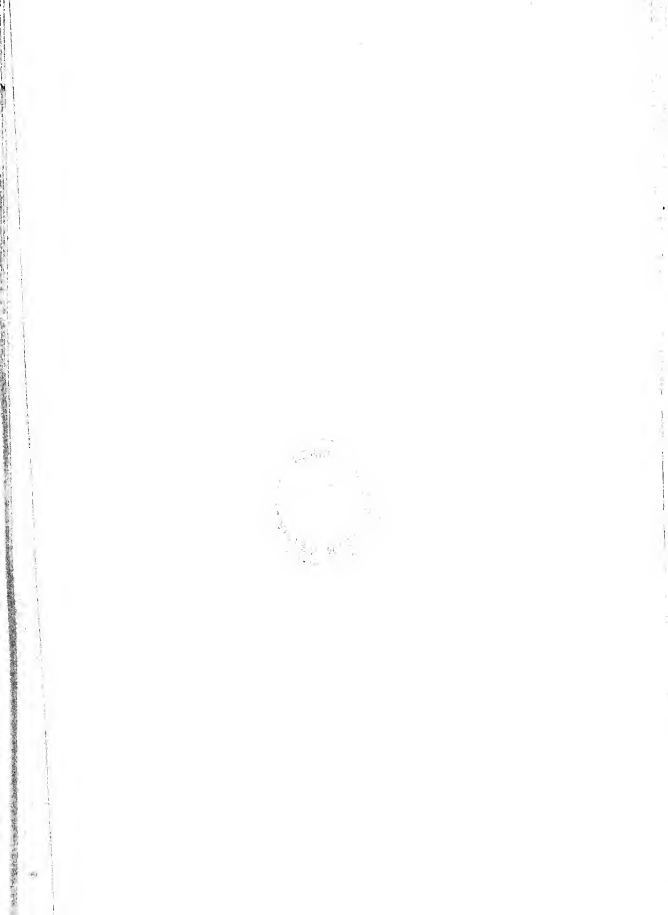
The Princess was actually going about the Prussian Court, telling people whom she thought broadminded that in her opinion Prussia ought to adopt a form of government with a real Parliament modelled on the traditions of Westminster. Can it be wondered at that there were Prussians who began to think that one day this clever English Princess might be dangerous? At the same time, at the Old Schloss it was known that Prince Frederick William and his wife were keeping open house to scholars, scientists, historians, ecclesiastics, authors, famous artists, and sculptors—all those intellectuals whom the militaristic junkers contemptuously termed 'leading Liberals.'



From the Royal Collection at Windsor. Painting by J. Philip, R.A.

THE MARRIAGE OF THE PRINCESS ROYAL AND PRINCE FREDERICK WILLIAM OF PRUSSIA IN THE CHAPEL ROYAL,
ST. JAMES'S PALACE, 1858

On the right : the Prince Consort, Leopold King of Belgium, the Prince of Wales, Queen Victoria, and the family, the Duchess of Kent, the Crown
Prince and Princess of Prussia.



Some of Prince Albert's letters, written to his daughter soon after her marriage, are of considerable interest, for they show that although the writer was clearly a man of high wisdom, he totally failed to grasp the problem of his daughter as it actually existed.

III

It would not be right to conclude from the foregoing that the Princess was making an entirely bad impression on the Berlin Court. She was a young and fascinating creature, very free with a delightful smile and still sufficiently naïve in the display of her wisdom and opinions to make many think that as she matured and absorbed the Hohenzollern atmosphere she would settle into the mould as an admirable Prussian Princess. They were contented to believe that her spontaneous Liberalism was a passing phase, at which before long she would learn to smile. Nevertheless, an uneasy feeling about the Princess Royal did prevail in the background. There was, so to speak, a glow of anxiety and irritation which could quickly be fanned into flame. There was widespread talk, for instance, that her husband was completely under her spell; and, before many years, everybody—like Prince Albert—expected that her husband would be King. In the mind of every 'reactionary' positive terror was conjured up by the whispered words, 'English influence.'

Lord and Lady Bloomfield were perfectly aware of this fierce resentment among the junkers at the suggestion of 'English influence.' They knew that the only person who could soothe this fearful obsession in the mind of the Prussian conservative was the Princess herself. They had heard that the Princess was talking of having English servants sent out, because she thought they were better than Prussians, and that she was calling her dogs and ponies by English names. She insisted upon being called 'Vicky,' which was English, instead of 'Victoria,' which was honest Prussian. These were trivialities, but they pointed in one direction. The Bloomfields knew that the less the Princess had to do with

anything English in Berlin the better. They therefore used their influence among the official British colony in the city to keep them out of the way of the Princess Royal. They themselves carefully avoided her. If the Bloomfields were invited to some function or entertainment and learned beforehand that the Princess was to be present, they excused themselves if it were possible. Lord Bloomfield was determined that on no account must he be involved in a conversation with the Princess Royal which appeared to have a private nature. If the Princess approached him at the inevitable Court gatherings, he quietly manœuvred her into a position where several Prussians could overhear what was being said, so that there could be no reason for accusing them of collusion. Unfortunately, Lord Bloomfield does not appear to have made it plain in his reports to London about the atmosphere in Berlin after the advent of the Princess Royal.

In Prince Albert's letters to Vicky there is no hint that he grasped the situation. He does mention to her that she will be the victim of a certain amount of sharp criticism, but he regards that only as a small matter—inevitable in Prussia—against which his daughter must brace herself. The criticism will fade away as time passes. So long as the serenity of his daughter's mind is not troubled by it, Prussian criticism is of no importance. In the meantime, it is of the *utmost* importance to keep Vicky firmly under his beneficent influence.

As early as possible he would like to come to Prussia—to some quiet place—where he could have a series of private conversations, first with Vicky, then with Fritz. One little incident, just after the arrival of the bridal pair in Berlin, had made even Prince Albert sceptical. A telegram had arrived at Buckingham Palace for the Queen. It was not in code. It read: 'The whole Royal Family is enchanted with my wife.' As Prince Albert remarked: "It must have amazed not only the Berlin postal officials but a good many other people on the Continent as well, who knew the high-born Prussians."

Parts of the early letters of Prince Albert to Vicky are of considerable interest. The words admirably reveal the character of the writer and if they do not so aptly indicate the nature of the recipient—for the simple reason that he did not fully understand it himself—they do build up a picture of Vicky as her father saw her.

‘Your festival time, if not your honeymoon, comes to an end to-day,’ he wrote to Vicky on February 17th. ‘On this I take leave to congratulate you, unfeeling though it may sound, for I wish for you the necessary time and tranquillity to digest the many impressions you have received, and which, otherwise, like a wild revel, first inflame, and then stupefy, leaving a dull nerveless lassitude behind. Your exertions, and the demands which have been made upon you, have been quite immense; you have done your best, and have won the hearts, or what is called the hearts, of all. In the nature of things we may now expect a little reaction. The public, just because it was raptured and enthusiastic, will now become minutely critical and take you to pieces anatomically. This is to be kept in view, although it need cause you no uneasiness, for you have only followed your natural bent, and have made no external demonstration which did not answer to the truth of your inner nature.

‘Your place is that of your husband’s wife and your mother’s daughter. You will desire nothing else, but you will also forgo nothing of that which you owe to your husband and to your mother. . . . To succeed in the affairs of life, apportionment of time is essential, and I hope you will make this your *first* care, that you may always have some time over for the fulfilment of every duty.’

At about the same time that Prince Albert was composing this platitudinous letter to his daughter—containing one precise and dangerous maxim which from frequent repetition was already well known to her—he sent to Stockmar a letter concerning her.

‘We, that is, she and I, have, I think, remained, and I believe will remain, the same to one another,’ he told his old tutor. ‘She continues to set great store by my advice and

my confidence. . . . I hold her promise to impart to me faithfully the progress of her inner life, and on the other hand have given her mine, to take a constantly active part in fostering it. You may be sure I will not fail in this, as I see in it merely the fulfilment of a sacred duty.

'What you say about an early visit had already been running in my head, and I will frankly explain what we think on this subject. Victoria and I are both desirous to have a meeting with the young couple, somewhere or other in the course of the year, having moreover given them a promise that we would. This could only be in the autumn. A rendezvous on the Rhine—for example, at Coblenz—would probably be the right thing. This does not exclude a flying visit by myself alone, which, if it is to be of any use, must be paid earlier in the year. How and where we could see each other I have naturally weighed, and am myself doubtful if Berlin is the place for me. I have therefore come to the conclusion that I might go to Coburg, and give the young people a rendezvous there.'

Shortly afterwards the Prince has become very confident about the future of his daughter. 'As to Vicky,' he writes, 'unquestionably she will turn out a very distinguished character, whom Prussia will have cause to bless.'

He set to work to arrange his solo trip to Germany with Vicky, which 'to be of any use' had to take place before the visit with the Queen in the autumn.

"My whole stay in Coburg can only be for six days," he told the Princess. "To see you and Fritz together in a quiet, homely way without visits of ceremony—I dare not picture it to myself too strongly. Talk it over with Fritz, and let me know if I can count on you, but do not let the plan get wind, otherwise people will be paying us visits, and our visit will lose its pleasant private character."

When Prince Albert wrote again on April 28th it seems as if he had read something in Vicky's letters which suggested that her existence in Berlin was not wholly happy and untroubled. But to him the problem in itself was only

important in that it served to point a moral. The troubled phase would pass.

'What you are now living through, observing, and doing, are the most important experiences, impressions, and acts of your life, for they are the first of a life independent and responsible to itself. That outside of and in close proximity to your true and tranquillizing happiness with dear Fritz your path of life is not wholly smooth, I regard as a most fortunate circumstance for you, inasmuch as it forces you to strengthen the powers of your mind.'

This might be taken to mean that in spite of all discouragements one should go one's own way, and that to pause for reflection as to the rightness of one's course was superfluous. Doubtless, Vicky had heard similar sentiments many times before; one must have a conviction of one's own rightness. Without a doubt she possessed that conviction, and she learned it from her father. It betrayed her many times.

The end of that letter descends to strike the strictly practical note which so often terminates unexpectedly Prince Albert's philosophical flights. 'I am delighted to see by your letter that you deliberate gravely upon your budget,' he continues. 'I shall be most happy to look through it, if you send it to me; this is the only way to have a clear idea to one's self of what one has, spends, and ought to spend. As this is a business of which I have had long and frequent experience, I will give you one rule for your guidance in it, namely, to set aside a considerable balance *pour l'imprevu*. This gentleman is the costliest of guests in life, and we shall look very blank if we have nothing to set before him.'

Imagine a Prussian conservative reading this request of the Consort of England to a Prussian Princess to send her budget to him for inspection! Would it stop at budgets?

Summer came and the Prince and Princess moved out of the Old Schloss to the little Gothic castle of Babelsburg, set in gardens full of rare trees, flowering shrubs, and brilliant blooms, with its windows looking down the wooded hill-sides to the lake, the rivers, and the fantastic palaces dotting the Royal part of Potsdam. This was a wonderful life after the

draughty dimness of the Old Schloss and the intense atmosphere of the overheated Court antechambers.

No sooner had they settled in at Babelsburg than the 'intellectuals' began to receive invitations to come and stay with them. This was the Princess's chance really to get to know these leaders of Prussian Liberal thought, whom she recognized as her followers of the future in the renaissance of her adopted country. No invitations were sent to the reactionary bureaucrats or the soldiers. The latter were not only amazed but personally insulted. Many of these 'intellectuals' were not *hoffheit*, which meant that they came of a family unfit to appear at Court. They were not received in high society. Prince Frederick William must have realized what he was doing, but, encouraged by his wife, he was ready to underestimate the consequences of too eager adoption at such an early stage of these admirable elements in the Prussian jungle.

The painters and professors and writers basked in the sun on the terraces of Babelsburg. The ambitious and unimportant Liberal politicians joined them and explained their plans. They were all delighted with the gracious English Princess. It was astonishing that one so young—and a girl at that—should display such a brilliant and comprehensive mind. She talked to them on their own ground. The Princess was equally delighted with the Liberals. Here was a breath of clean air at last.

One of these Liberals, Professor Schellbach, who had taught Prince Frederick William mathematics, has left his first impression of the Princess, which is worth quoting. He records that, 'the first words which the Princess addressed to me with the greatest kindness were, "I love mathematics, physics, and chemistry." I was much pleased. Under direction of her highly cultivated father, who had himself studied it, Princess Victoria had become acquainted with natural science and had even received her first teaching from such famous men as Faraday and Hoffman. Our beloved Princess soon revealed her love for art and science and her pleasure in setting problems of her own.'

Artists could have spoken with equal satisfaction after a discussion with the Princess on painting, or historians after a discussion upon history. A young woman so intellectually advanced would arouse high interest even to-day. In the 'sixties she was a phenomenon—to the 'reactionaries,' a disquieting phenomenon. If the Princess had exclaimed at a Court ball: "I love mathematics, physics, and chemistry," she would have created a most unpleasant sensation.

IV

In June Prince Albert arrived in Coburg on his solo visit. His visit was a complete surprise to the Prussians. Why had he appeared on tiptoe like this? What was he saying to Prince Frederick William and his daughter, who had suddenly vanished from Babelsburg and joined him? We can picture the father who had been pining for his daughter walking with her arm in arm in the garden. They had much to talk over. We can see him bring Vicky back to where Fritz is sitting on a garden seat and, a few minutes later, conduct his grave and respectful son-in-law on a similar bosky excursion. It was a pity that the only way to bring about this intimate meeting was to keep it a dead secret until it actually happened. Then, it was bound to remain secret no longer. It was an innocent but ill-judged proceeding.

However, Prince Albert was very well satisfied with his visit. Before starting on the return journey he wrote to the Queen, 'the relation between the young couple is all that can be desired. I have had long talks with them both, singly and together, which gave me the greatest satisfaction.'

They had no strong objection in Berlin to Queen Victoria and her Consort's paying a private visit to Prussia in August. In the circumstances it was inevitable that they should come before long. But they were startled when they heard that Queen Victoria—who had expressly stated that this was a private visit—had ordered certain *official* persons to attend her. Lord Malmesbury, the Foreign Secretary, Lord Clarendon, his predecessor in that office and Lord Granville,

late Lord President of the Council and crony of the detested fire-eater, Palmerston, were extraordinary people to take as companions on a family visit. In point of fact, Prince Albert, with the entire approval of his wife, was anxious to make an expert study of the Prussian political situation, which filled him with unease, as it existed under the extremely reactionary and almost vicious Manteuffel ministry.

Outwardly, the English invasion was heartily applauded as the visitors passed through Berlin on their way to Potsdam. Fritz had travelled to Magdeburg to meet them. The 'darling child' was waiting on the platform at Wildpark station with a nosegay for her mother as the train drew in. The sun was beating fiercely on the roof of the carriage, and the Queen was tired, but she was quite cheered up when Vicky stepped in and embraced them warmly. Among other things, the Queen was able to tell her daughter of her amusement when old Marshal Wrangel had greeted them at Berlin and told them that Vicky was his 'Angel.'

'Another five minutes brought us to Potsdam,' says the Queen in her diary. There was 'a guard of honour of gigantic grenadiers with pointed caps and all the Princes and Princesses. At the door of the station was the dear Prince of Prussia. We got into carriages and drove up to Babelsburg. . . . My sitting-room commands splendid views of the lake and the lovely terraces. There were charming walks under the trees and fountains on all the terraces. Vicky came and sat with me. I felt as if she were my own.'

Babelsburg enchanted Vicky's mother. She described the house as 'a Gothic *bijou*, full of furniture, and flowers (creepers), which they arrange very prettily round screens, and lamps, and pictures. There are many irregular turrets and towers and steps.' The crowded rooms of Babelsburg made her feel thoroughly at home.

Meanwhile, the news reached Berlin that *Stockmar* was on his way to join the party at Babelsburg! So the dangerous and iniquitous old Baron had been summoned to confer with the English statesmen on Prussian affairs in Prussia! *Stockmar* never came near Berlin on his own

account. He knew too well what the Berliners thought about him.

Her Majesty was overjoyed to see 'our dear, excellent old friend Stockmar' drive up to the door of Babelsburg. Stockmar had for years advocated the formation of a Liberal German State under the leadership of Prussia. Probably it was he who had convinced Albert of Coburg, years before, that this was the ideal goal for the German people. As there are records in existence showing that the Conservatives believed he was actively plotting the overthrow of Manteuffel and that he actually had in his bag a list of the Liberal ministry to follow, with other compromising plans, there can be no doubt that spies were active around the happy family circle at Babelsburg.

The Hohenzollerns came flocking out to the house to chat with the Queen of England. Continental Royalties caught their breath at her name even in those days. Apart from her being the sovereign of the greatest Empire upon earth, they knew her as the only ruler who contrived to live a happy domestic life and who somehow seemed able to keep all her subjects in a state of eternal self-satisfaction and contentment. Only a few years before, a famous cartoon had circulated throughout the Courts of Europe. It showed a pair of scales. Weighing down one side of the balance was the little figure of Queen Victoria. In the other pan, high in the air, ignominiously thrust together were the other crowned heads of Europe with their consorts. The cartoon was called 'Light Sovereigns'—a shrewd dig not only at the somewhat uncertain position of these sovereigns in their own realms, but also at the 'lightness' of their personal lives. It was hardly possible that such a proud and jealous race as the Prussians could refrain from feeling envious bitterness in their hearts, even had they no personal provocation.

Before the departure from Babelsburg Prince Albert celebrated his thirty-ninth birthday. 'Vicky gave her portrait, a small oil one by Hartmann, very like, though not flattered, and a drawing by herself. There were two birthday cakes. Vicky had ordered one with as many lights as Albert

numbered years, which is the Prussian custom.' The day was a busy one, for in the afternoon the Hohenzollerns were much in evidence ; so were some of the Princess's Liberals, in whom Prince Albert took as great an interest as did his daughter. The fact that these were in many cases 'unworthy' to the *hoffheit* circle caused a little embarrassment.

Babelsburg shone with splendid illumination that warm summer night. To suspicious reactionaries the nest of the scheming Englanders was blazing in triumphant challenge. Lamps outlined all the garden walks and flowerbeds on the hill-side, wreaths of lamps festooned the roads to Babelsburg, red lights encircled the white fountains, Glienicke bridge was colourfully picked out at the expense of the tradesmen of Potsdam.

Strong emotion marked the leave-taking. The Queen could hardly bear it ; and she had some excuse for her tears.

'All would be comparatively easy were it not for the one thought that I cannot be with her at the very critical moment when every other mother goes to her child !' wrote the Queen miserably in her diary. Vicky was expecting to become a mother in the New Year.

To the people the lovely Princess from the fabulous palaces of London was a figure of fascination and delight. But the feelings of the Prussian people were not of much importance. Vicky was seen at the great autumn Rhine manœuvres, in her carriage and on horseback with her husband. She disdained to wear a veil to protect her face from sun and dust like the other ladies and, apparently, this aroused the liveliest comment and satisfaction among the troops. Marshal Wrangel told her about it. She was free with her smiles to the tired groups halted by the wayside—too free for the approval of officers who did not think of their men as human beings. The Princess met numerous officers, high and low. Knowing these, one and all, to be hand in glove with repressionism in Prussia she was reserved in her manner.

The Prussian officer was the most vital element in Prussian life. Every junker was an officer. She made

another of her mistakes. She refused to cultivate with enthusiasm a powerful and childish sensitive caste, whom with patience and careful study she might have persuaded to fight her battle for her.

One discordant incident in which the Princess figures is related of those manœuvres on the Rhine. She was being shown round some bivouacs with her husband, Wrangel, and other high officers by a regimental orderly officer. A young sentry was standing over a tarpaulined pile of stores. The regimental officer approached him with the object of showing Her Royal Highness the efficient manner in which the Prussian recruit learned his military duties. He asked the man to give a list of his responsibilities as a sentry. He was a boorish-looking soldier. After a few words he stammered and came to a stop. The officer drew back his fist and struck him viciously on the jaw. The soldier reeled. He resumed his stance of wooden rigidity. Not a trace of resentment or amazement appeared on his face. He had expected what he got. He looked a little proud that the blow had been delivered before the English Princess. Vicky shuddered. Then she flamed with rage.

"Now I know more about the Prussian officer than I did five minutes ago!" she exclaimed fiercely, to the genuine astonishment of the group about her.

"That is nothing unusual, ma'am," said a general in explanation. "The fellow is a soldier. He deserved no less. He did not know his duty."

"I would not have seen that in the English Army. It was horrible. A soldier has a right to be treated as a human being," answered the Princess, turning and looking reproachfully at her husband, as if this was a matter which was his to set right.

Nobody would dispute the rightness of Vicky's attitude; but she should have held her tongue. Her outburst caused mortal offence and did no good. It humiliated a Prussian officer. It was a declaration of war to people who did not know they were her enemies. By turning to her husband she identified him in the eyes of the witnesses with her point of

view. That a Prussian Princess should thus take the initiative left the soldiers speechless. It changed their attitude toward Prince Frederick William. This is but a concrete example of how the Princess Royal conducted herself among the Prussians from the earliest days. Unhappily, when anything was amiss the name of *England* was too often used to point a moral.

That October, King Frederick William IV lapsed into such a weak mental state that Fritz's father, the Crown Prince, was proclaimed Regent. Shortly afterwards, torn by internal ambitions and jealousies, the Manteuffel ministry fell to pieces. Sponsored by the Regent, a Liberal ministry took its place. The Crown Prince had always professed mildly Liberal views, in so far as he had any views at all on anything but a fine regiment, but, as events were shortly to prove, he was as weak-backed in his political convictions as the new Liberal ministry was weak-backed when brought to battle. Prince Albert had written many valuable letters to his friend the Crown Prince on the subject of Prussian Liberalism, and these had been acknowledged with gratitude and apparently digested with intelligence. But the Liberal conviction had no roots in the Crown Prince as it had in his son Fritz. At heart he was as ruthless a junker as any man in Prussia. It did not take *Bismarck* long to prove this.

The heart of Vicky sang with joy. She could see only the present. The days of the Liberals had come. They had come so quickly and easily. Now the foundations were going to be laid. One day she and her handsome Fritz would put on the new house a magnificent roof. At Buckingham Palace Prince Albert was opening telegrams from his daughter—coded telegrams. Manteuffel had gone! His good Liberal friend the Crown Prince held the reins. Prince Albert must write to him. He must write more than one letter. He must keep the Crown Prince's mind running steadily along the road of Liberal ideology. Prince Albert knew that though his friend had all the obstinacy of the Prussian leader, he was neither a firm man nor an unusually intelligent one. He was one who could be led in the way he

led others. Prince Albert expressed his thoughts to Stockmar. 'This first step toward the reduction of order out of miserable chaos,' he wrote delightedly. But he could see further than that. 'Will the Prince have the courage to surround himself with honourable and patriotic men?' he asked. 'That is the question.'

From this moment Fritz took on a greater significance in Vicky's eyes than that of a mere husband. With his father's assumption of the Regency he was constantly leaving Babelsburg for the day to sit at the meetings of the Ministry. His father had appointed Privy Councillor Brunnemann to keep him closely in touch with State affairs.

November came and the wind was whistling through the tree-tops and about the turrets of Babelsburg. It was time to move. A fresh delight came to the Princess when her husband told her that they were not to return to the Old Schloss. Their things were being moved across to the fine Palace on Unter den Linden. This was to be their permanent Berlin home. On November 20th, the day before Vicky's eighteenth birthday, they drove into Berlin to their new quarters.

The new life seemed really to be opening like a beautiful flower for Vicky. The wind blew fair for the Liberals; in January—God willing—she would be the mother of a son—a magnificent fellow like Fritz who would learn to think as his mother thought—and now they were driving toward a clean, spacious, comfortable home. One day Prussia would be a place worthy of all the love and respect she could bestow upon it.

PART FOUR

' ENGLANDERIN '

I

' Thee will we hate with a lasting hate,
We will not abate from our hate,
Hate by water and hate by land,
Hate of the head and hate of the hand.
Hate of the workers and hate of the crowned,
Throttling hate of seventy millions,
One in their love and one in their hate,
They have all but one single, only foe :
ENGLAND ! '

Ernst Lissauer's ' Hymn of Hate. '

' **Y**OU ask me what I think of the English marriage. I must separate the two words to give you my opinion. The "English" in it does not please me; the marriage may be quite good, for the Princess has the reputation of a lady of brain and heart. If the Princess can leave the Englishwoman at home and become a Prussian, then she may be a blessing to the country. If our future Queen on the Prussian throne remains the least bit English, then I see our Court surrounded by English influence. '

Those are the words of Bismarck. He wrote them to his friend, von Gerlach. Soon, now, Bismarck was coming from Paris to dedicate his life to Prussia. Doubtless he heard in Paris, as everybody had heard in Berlin, that, *by the wish of the Queen of England, Dr. Martin was coming from London to assist the German specialists at the confinement of her daughter, the Princess of Prussia.* If Bismarck did hear this, it is certain that, just for a moment, a terrible flicker shone up behind the bolting, glassy blue eyes of the giant without a soul.

II

January 27th, 1859. Berlin waited for the roar of artillery from the park. Her Royal Highness, the Princess of Prussia, had been in labour all the morning. One hundred and one guns—an heir to the Throne; twenty-one guns—a Princess.

The crowd muttered restlessly in the street outside Prince Frederick William's Palace. Inside, in the room of confinement, a fearsome scene was enacting. The child had been born—a boy. But no order had passed to the waiting artillerymen. A young husband, half-demented, who had clutched his unanæsthetised wife in his arms through the endless agony of a nightmare labour. An eighteen-years-old Princess, pale as the sheets, stiff, unconscious, hovering on the brink of death. Doctors and nurses frantically swinging and slapping a naked, lifeless child, thrusting back the dismayed and weeping women out of their path. The tableau scarcely altered in an hour and a half. Then, an infant cough. A cry. The boy had come to life. Prince Frederick took his son as soon as he was wrapped and laid him in the historic wooden cradle of the Hohenzollerns. The Berliners were counting the guns. Twenty guns. Twenty-one guns. Twenty-two guns! Twenty-three! Twenty-four! There was no mistake; it was an heir to the Throne.

'Papa' Wrangel, with beaming countenance, came hurrying down the steps of the Palace into the street.

"Well—what have you got to tell us?" shouted a workman.

"All's well, children," bellowed the old Marshal. "It is as fine a recruit as I could wish for."

A telegram arrived at Windsor. 'A boy,' it announced. The Queen ran to her desk. 'Is it a fine boy?' she scribbled on a sheet of paper. Presently, her question flashed to Berlin. It was tragic irony that the Queen should have thought to have sent that message. It was not a fine boy. It was a cripple boy, though nobody realized that grim stroke of Destiny for three days. In the struggle to bring the boy into the world the left shoulder-socket had torn away;

the arm was useless ; the left leg was tense, giving little reaction, and the child continually brought its hand to the left side of its head as if in pain.

The celebrated Dr. Martin, in whom so much confidence had been placed, was not present at the birth. Perhaps it would not have made the smallest difference to what took place if he had arrived ; nevertheless, the fact that he did not do so seems to have had an unfortunate result. There is a good deal of evidence pointing to the conclusion that from this fateful day the Princess had no faith in the best German doctors. Whether or not the German specialists in attendance were skilful in handling a difficult case, one of them, at least, gave the Princess grounds for prejudice. At the critical moment in the birth when she was fully conscious, this man brutally announced : " It is useless. There is no hope for the mother or the child."

The reasons for the non-appearance of Martin have always been somewhat garbled. Some say that he was not warned, by contrivance of certain persons who were offended because he had been sent by the English Queen ; but the story which seems most likely is that, early on the morning of the birth, a footman was told to take by hand a message to Martin and, having no idea of its urgent nature, he pushed it into a letter-box to save himself trouble.

It was Martin who, three days later, confirmed to the horrified parents the nature of the injuries inflicted on their child.

" He can be cured," said the mother confidently.

" It would be cruel to raise your hopes too high, ma'am," came the reply.

Thus it was that the prejudice, or the alleged prejudice, against German doctors found its way into the mind of the Princess. At this stage the prejudice seems of small importance, but in the years ahead it was destined to stir up a Prussian tempest which not only lashed her with merciless fury at the most lonely and tragic moment of her life, but which also inevitably deepened the growing ill-will of the Prussians toward England.

Prince Frederick William was bursting with pride of his son. He took the boy about the Palace in his arms to show him to servants and to everybody else. The child had a healthy appearance, judging by a letter received from a German woman friend by Lady Westmoreland, about a week after his birth. 'I must tell you of my wonderful good fortune,' said her correspondent. 'I have actually seen this precious child in his father's arms! You will ask me what this child of so many prayers and wishes is like. They say all babies are alike; I do not think so; this one has a beautiful complexion, pink and white, and the most lovely little hand ever seen! The nose rather large; the eyes were shut, which was as well, as the light was so strong. His happy father was holding him in his arms, and himself showed traces of all he had gone through at the time. The child was believed to be dead, so you may conceive the ecstasy of everyone at his first cry.'

It was not until later that, from lack of use, the boy's left hand began to take on a livid, shrivelled appearance. Doubtless, after the first revelation of the deformity, the young and optimistic parents let themselves believe that the doctors had exaggerated its gravity. For instance, Vicky, perhaps understandably, made it by no means clear in her letters to her mother that there was anything amiss which might not answer to treatment. That there was such a thing, the English grandparents were left to discover for themselves in course of time.

When the Queen heard that the christening was to take place on March 5th and that the date was *unalterable*, she fumed and wept. Westminster was in the throes of a political crisis. She could not leave London; therefore, Albert must not do so either. "It is a *stupid* law in Prussia, I must say, to be so particular about having the child christened so soon," she complained. "I don't think I ever felt so bitterly disappointed. It almost breaks my heart. And then it is an occasion so gratifying to both nations and brings them so much together and it is particularly mortifying."

Lord Raglan and Captain the Hon. de Ros, Prince

Albert's Equerry, arrived in Berlin to represent Queen Victoria and the Prince Consort, and with them came a letter to Vicky from her father.

'I was certain that the presence of Lord Raglan and Captain de Ros would give you pleasure,' he told her. 'Ours will come when they return and we can put questions to them. My first will be: Has the Princess gone out? and does she begin to enjoy the air, to which alone she can look for regaining strength and health? Or is she in the way to grow weak and watery by being baked like a bit of pastry in hot rooms? My second: Is she grown? I will spare you my others.'

'Your description of the Prince's kindness and loving sympathy for you makes me very happy. I love him dearly and respect and value him, and I am glad, too, that in you and my little grandchild he has found ties of family happiness which cannot fail to give him those domestic tastes, in which alone in the long run life's true contentment is to be found.'

Raglan and de Ros having once more appeared at Buckingham Palace and exhausted themselves in relating to the grandparents every detail of their experiences, Prince Albert went immediately to his desk, for he felt that on certain personal points Vicky was in need of further advice. This monumental epistle of common-sense fatherliness has parts which are worthy of an anthology.

'Lord Raglan's and Captain de Ros's news of you has given me great pleasure,' he began sedately enough. He was now ready to express what was really in his mind. 'But,' he went on, 'I gather from them that you look rather languid and exhausted. Some sea air would be the right thing for you; it is what does all newly made mothers the most good when their "campaign" is over. I am, however, delighted to hear you have begun to get into the air. Now pass on as soon as possible to cold washing, shower-baths, etc., so as to brace the system again, and to restore elasticity to the nerves and muscles.'

'You are now eighteen years old,' he told his daughter,

' and you will hold your own against many a buffet in life ; still, you will encounter many for which you were not prepared and which you would fain have been spared. You must arm yourself against these, like Austria against the chance of war, otherwise you will break down and drop into a sickly state, which would be disastrous to yourself, and inflict a frightful burden upon poor Fritz for life ; besides which, it would unfit you for fulfilling all the duties of your station.'

He returns to the all-important theme. ' In reference to having children, the proverb says, *Le premier pour la santé, le second pour la beauté, le troisième gâte tout*. But England proves that the last part of the saying is not true, and health and beauty, those two great blessings, are only injured where the wife does not make zealous use of the intervals to repair exhaustion, undoubtedly great, of the body, and to strengthen both for what it has gone through and for what it has to go through, and where also the intervals are not sufficiently long to leave the body the necessary time to recruit.'

But, while Albert would continue to write to his daughter in this broadminded and attractively free vein, bent solely on helping her along the way as he saw best, her selfish mother was on the eve of embarking on a daily campaign of a very different character. It was to go on all through the year and, though the Queen's letters are not in existence, we can see perfectly clearly the line she was taking from what Lord Clarendon told Charles Greville, the famous diarist, when the two happened to meet in Berlin that autumn. Clarendon had had it direct from Stockmar, who ought to know, and here, according to gossip Greville, is exactly what the old Baron had said.

' I want to talk to you on a very important matter, and to invoke your aid. It relates to this " poor child " (the Princess Royal). Her mother is behaving abominably to her, and unless a stop can be put to her conduct I know not what may be the consequence, for she is not in good health, and she is worried and frightened to death. The Queen

wishes to exercise the same control and authority over her that she did before her marriage, and she writes her constant letters full of anger and reproaches, desiring all sorts of things to be done that it is neither right nor desirable that she should do, and complaining of her remissness in writing to her sisters or to Miss Hildyard and her forgetting what is due to her own family and country till the poor child is made seriously ill, and put in a state dangerous to her in her actual condition' (she was again pregnant).

The Baron doubtless laid it on strong. However, it appears from this that even Vicky thought there was a point beyond which she could not go. In practice, she was going pretty far, as we already know. The important part of her household staff were now chiefly English. Her table appointments were English. Her cookery was English. She had earned the reputation of looking scornful when a Prussian referred to anything as 'Old Prussian.' That, and the constant appearance in her drawing-room of hated democrats like Virchow and Helmholtz among the other intelligentsia, visiting scientists and the like from London, added to lack of proper appreciation of the military men, were doing her own cause harm enough.

III

The summer came and the Prince and Princess had to have a Potsdam residence. Babelsburg was too small and undignified now that they were starting a family. They were given the New Palace, Potsdam—that remarkable monument which Frederick the Great had built for himself at the end of the Seven Years' War to prove to his enemies that he still had ample funds to finance a new war if they cared to challenge him. The grey, block-like building, rising up solidly on a kind of stepped stone table against a dense background of trees, was a colossal rococo toy palace which might fascinate the sightseer, but offered no attractions to the housewife. The New Palace, with its long marble Garten Salle heavy with incrustations of stones, its army of

naked statues, its mirrored galleries, silver-lined rooms, and decaying velvets, had the uninviting tawdriness of a mock Versailles. It was not *wohnlich*, as Queen Victoria had remarked when being shown over it in the previous year.

However, for the summer the New Palace was tolerable, for the fine gardens, rather formal, offered tremendous scope for a brilliant gardener such as was the Princess Royal, while everyone agreed that the scent of the orange groves on a warm summer evening compensated for all else. The Princess soon satisfied herself that some of the smaller upstairs rooms at the New Palace could be made fairly homelike. She set to work with ardour to array them plentifully with assorted pictures, photographs, samplers, childhood souvenirs, cheap china, expensive china, glass cabinets, plants, and screens ; everything, in fact, to make them look like her mother's rooms at Osborne and Windsor.

Chief nurse to Willy was Mrs. Hobbs. She had no especial reason to hope for such an exalted appointment when she came to Berlin, for her post then was only that of the Princess Royal's personal maid. But, on the whole, the mother considered the chief nurse's lack of knowledge of child management to be an advantage, as she was the more ready to fall in with the ideas of her mistress on all points. Perhaps 'Hobbsy' was the pleasantest element on the grown-up side in William's childhood days. If she was stern, she was so only because pressure was put upon her, and the pale little boy with golden hair, who soon began to understand that he was a *peculiar case*, had reason to regret the day when he passed out of the hands of Georgiana Hobbs. English theories of nursery management and hygiene were possibly slightly more advanced than those of Prussia. They were certainly at variance on a number of points. The Princess adopted the English system. Her Prussian relations did not approve, and she knew it. She had made another of her mistakes. Everybody in Berlin, and most people outside it who mattered, knew that the heir to the Throne of Prussia was being brought up as an Englishman.

Early in the summer of 1859 she set out for England.

There had been some doubt as to whether the Hohenzollerns would let her come so soon and Queen Victoria had made herself a great nuisance. Fritz did not go with her and William was too young to travel, for which fact she was grateful. She was dreading the day when her parents discovered William's deformity for the first time.

At Osborne, father and daughter were constantly seen together. Their faces showed their genuine delight in one another. Prince Albert told Stockmar how he had found his Vicky 'a most charming companion, so well, so gay, much better-looking, somewhat grown, and in excellent spirits.'

While they walked in the grounds at Osborne Prince Albert told Vicky that it was time a wife was found for Bertie. A wife suitable to Bertie needed very careful choosing. The boy did not much want to marry anybody. Probably it would be best if some suitable German Princess could be found, though that was not essential. Vicky must look around and keep her eyes and ears open when she got back to Berlin. He was making a list of Continental Protestant Princesses. He would send it to her so that she could make discreet inquiries about each of them.

Vicky returned to Prussia, but at Christmas both she and Fritz came to Windsor and they were there for Bertie's birthday. They still considered William too young to travel. Vicky made a point of seeing her old ruler 'Laddle' (Lady Lyttleton) during this visit.

'The dear Princess came in, habited and hatted and cock-feathered from her ride, looking very well, but in a *very* bad cold,' records 'Laddle.' 'She embraced me and received me most kindly, and took me into her magnificent sitting-room, where I spent almost an hour with her, till she had to go and change her dress for luncheon. She talked much of her baby and inquired after everybody belonging to me and seemed as happy as ever.'

These references to the 'happiness' of the Princess Royal recur so constantly in the correspondence of the period relating to her that they become remarkably tiresome. This

well serves to point a moral in regard to her. Constant 'happiness' is too often construed by the ill-affected as *cocksureness*—and quite frequently this is the truth. There is plenty of evidence that the *happiness* and *enthusiasm* of the Princess were read in this light in Prussia.

In July, 1860, a telegram arrived at Windsor. 'Soon after we sat down to breakfast came a telegram from Fritz—Vicky had got a daughter at 8.10, and both were well!' reports the Queen's diary jubilantly. 'What joy! Children jumping about—everyone delighted—so thankful and relieved.'

Prince Albert instantly departed to his desk. Advice was needed.

'I hope you are very quiet,' he wrote sternly, 'and keep this well in mind, that the body has to take on a new conformation, and the nervous system a new life. Only rest of brain, heart, and body, along with good nourishment and its assimilation by regular undisturbed digestion, can restore the animal forces. My physiological treatise should not bore you, for it is always good to keep the GREAT PRINCIPLES in view, in accordance with which we have to regulate our actions. . . . Little girls are much prettier than boys. I advise her to model herself after her aunt Beatrice (then aged three). That excellent lady has not now a moment to spare. "I have no time," she says, when asked for anything, "I must write letters to my niece."' "

William was now nearing eighteen months old. The Queen and her husband decided it was time they saw him. They arranged to arrive in Coburg on September 25th to stay at the Ducal Palace with Ernest, Albert's elder brother. Vicky and Fritz were to join them there with William.

The dreaded moment could be postponed no longer. William had already undergone some treatment, which was very troublesome to him, but the hoped-for improvement had not manifested itself. Fortunately, he was a lively baby, so, perhaps, he would succeed in carrying off the situation gracefully despite his humiliating deformity. In a letter of August, Prince Albert said jokingly, 'I console myself with

the hope of seeing your first work before long, and although you have always something to object to in it, yet it is to me a source of great delight,' so that, from his tone, it is evident how deeply sensitive his daughter was about William.

The grandparents had already crossed the Channel when a telegram reached them from Duke Ernest. His step-mother, the Dowager Duchess, was gravely ill. Could they postpone their visit? Fortunately, it was one of Albert's principles that he never postponed things, so that the Queen had a good excuse for deciding to continue on her way to Coburg. At the station waited Duke Ernest, Vicky, and Fritz, all in deepest mourning. The Dowager Duchess was dead. Her Majesty was in high spirits. It was going to be a most enjoyable visit.

William was sent for as soon as the carriages had set down the visitors. He came toddling in sturdily, holding the hands of Mrs. Hobbs, a girlish little fair-haired child in a white dress with black bows. 'He is a fine, fat child, with beautiful white soft skin, very fine shoulders and limbs, and a very dear face, like Vicky and Fritz, and also Louise of Baden. He has Fritz's eyes and Vicky's mouth, and very fair curly hair. We felt so happy to see him at last!'

That was the Queen's first impression of William. As for the injured left arm, she positively refused to be aware of it. Her blindness was more insulting than commiseration. However, there was no doubt that Grandma was very taken with little William and he with her. William was summoned to her room every morning during her stay and he was constantly in demand at other times. Her diary is full of such entries as, 'dear little William as usual with me before dinner'—'a darling child'—'the dear little boy is so intelligent and pretty, so good and affectionate'—'the darling little boy with us for nearly an hour, running about so dearly and merrily.'

The time came for departure and Berlin was not regretful to hear that the Queen of England was going, for once again she had unnecessarily aggravated those in high places by bringing a Minister of State, Lord Clarendon, in her train.

The Queen 'felt the parting deeply,' when little William was hoisted into their railway carriage at Cologne to say good-bye. Next year William was to come to Osborne with his parents.

Vicky was now in possession of the list of eligible princesses for Bertie. She made her inquiries and was not much impressed by the result. However, her attention was drawn to the fifth name on the list by her lady-in-waiting, Walpurga, afterwards Lady Paget. This candidate, of whom she knew nothing, was Alexandra, daughter of Prince Christian of Schleswig-Holstein-Sonderburg-Glucksburg, who would one day be King of Denmark. This time the results of her inquiries were distinctly interesting. Alexandra was far and away the loveliest of all the candidates. Evidently, she was full of high spirits, which would please Bertie, because she held the astonishing reputation of being able to turn cartwheels round the drawing-room with perfect propriety as regards petticoats. More significantly, she was of strong and discreet personality, she was beloved by everybody who knew her and she was interested in charitable undertakings. It so happened that Princess Alix, as she was generally known, was staying with the Grand Duchess of Mecklenburg. Vicky arranged to spend a few days at Strelitz with the Duchess. Alix fascinated her. An enthusiastic account of her find went to London. Prince Albert was deeply impressed. For the moment he decided to give the matter his careful consideration and leave it at that.

The afternoon of December 31, 1860, started a train of events which in a few days brought the Princess Royal to a new epoch in her life. For some time the King had been lying gravely ill in the Sans Souci Palace at Potsdam and he rarely had lucid moments now. As usual they were spending the winter in Berlin, and at nine o'clock they drove across to the Palace of the Crown Prince and Princess to take tea with them. A footman brought in a telegram from Sans Souci. The King had taken a bad turn. It was a warning, not a summons. These relapses had occurred before. They did not take the matter too seriously. They went home to

bed. It was New Year's Eve, but they were tired and agreed not to sit up.

The Princess woke up. Somebody was knocking on the door. It was two o'clock. The wardrobe maid entered. A telegram. There was no hope for the King. They must come to Sans Souci immediately. All members of the Royal Family were summoned. They jumped out of bed and threw on the first clothes to hand. Vicky screwed up her hair and thrust it under her bonnet. The two of them descended to the courtyard. They carried no luggage. They did not stop to summon a footman or a carriage, but went out into the street. They shivered in 12 degrees of frost as they hurried through the streets in the bright starlight to the Crown Prince's Palace. To Vicky the experience was like a fantastic dream. She had never before walked unguarded through the streets of a great city.

A carriage waited at the entrance of the Crown Prince's Palace. The Crown Prince and Princess came out. The four of them drove to the station. They took the first train to Potsdam. None of the few other passengers recognized the four Royalties. Presently, they were being shown up to the King's room at Sans Souci.

The room was full of dancing shadows. Besides the flames of the fire, only a dim lamp lit the scene. Sounds of desperate breathing broke the stillness. Queen Elizabeth sat in a chair by the bed. One arm supported her husband's head. Her own head was resting beside his on the pillow, while her free hand continually wiped away the perspiration bursting out on the flaming, haggard face. The King's eyes were tightly closed. They stood at the foot of the bed. Nobody spoke.

The fire began to spit and crackle. A terrible sound drowned the crackling of the fire. It was the death rattle. An hour and a half passed. They still stood at the foot of the bed. The King's head lay motionless on the pillow. The Queen hardly stirred beside him. Unceasingly, the unearthly hollow rattle had burst from the throat of the dying man. Relations tiptoed in, gazed at the King, and tiptoed

out again. The doctors, who stood in a corner, came over to the bedside, shook their heads, and retired. The rattling stopped. They remained standing. More hours passed, the awful silence only disturbed by the sound of breathing now. The set face still shone with perspiration in the lamp light. It was dawn. The lamp was carried away and the curtains pulled back to let in the grey light of the New Year.

Pale with fatigue, they went into the next room, leaving Queen Elizabeth with her husband. Crown Princess Augusta fell asleep on the nearest chair. Vicky dozed on a sofa. There were many relations present. The men paced to and fro. At noon they went back into the King's room. He was still breathing and the old Queen still sat beside him. Moved by the stricken look in the hard face of the old woman, the Princess approached and kissed her hand. They left the room. They sat or stood about amid the restless atmosphere of the ante-chamber until five o'clock had struck. Fritz saw that his young wife was nearing collapse. He ordered a carriage and sent her across to rest in the New Palace.

She awoke at one o'clock in the morning. They told her that His Majesty was dying. The carriage was waiting. She dressed hurriedly and descended. They told her that the King was dead. Presently Fritz arrived. She was Crown Princess of Prussia.

IV

Next morning, she told her mother, they 'drove to Sans Souci and saw the King and Queen (her parents-in-law). May God bless and preserve them and may theirs be a long, happy, and blessed reign! Then I went into the room where the King lay, and I could hardly bring myself to go away again. There was so much of comfort in looking there at that quiet, peaceful form at rest after all he had suffered. . . . I sat some time with the old Queen, who is so calm and resigned and touching in her grief. She does not cry, but she looks heart-broken. She said to me: "I am no longer of any use in this world. I have no longer any vocation, any duties to perform,

and only lived for him." Then she was so kind to me, kinder than she has ever been yet, and said I was like her own child and a comfort to her !'

In June, 1861, they went to Osborne, taking William with them. The public showed great interest and enthusiasm in the visit, for not only was the Princess Royal coming to England for the first time as Crown Princess of Prussia, but she had brought her son William, the heir to the Throne, about whom there had been so many strange rumours. Their stay at Osborne was quite uneventful, but Kaiser William II, writing in exile many years later, has recorded that it must have been during that visit that he was dandled by the Prince Consort in a table napkin, for the next time he came to England his grandfather was in his grave.

Bertie came to Potsdam that September. He was to meet his future bride, though he did not know it. It had been carefully arranged with the Grand Duchess of Mecklenburg-Schwerin. They took Bertie to see Spiers Cathedral. He was not especially impressed until he came face to face with a beautiful girl in the aisle. The girl's chaperon came forward and greeted his sister effusively, for, oddly enough, Alix of Denmark was also being shown round Spiers Cathedral. Delighted to meet the Danish Princess, Bertie became an enthusiastic archæologist and prolonged the tour as much as possible by a minute inspection of every detail. His sister did not doubt that he would have little difficulty in falling in love with Alix, if he had not already done so. The matter was as good as settled.

William I, King of Prussia, was crowned with medieval ceremony in the ancient chapel of Königsberg on October 19th, 1861. On this occasion the Crown Princess must have made a remarkable impression on all the Kings and Grand Dukes of Germany, the Princes of Europe, and the other State guests, if the enthusiastic description of Lord Clarendon, Queen Victoria's representative, can be credited. Indeed, to him, as also to Lord Granville, she carried off the honours in the Coronation. The Crown Princess appeared in gold and ermine with white satin. One lady-in-waiting

followed her in blue velvet, the other in red. 'The great feature of the ceremony,' reported Lord Clarendon to the Queen, 'was the manner in which the Princess Royal did homage to the King. Lord Clarendon is at a loss for words to describe to Your Majesty the exquisite grace and the intense emotion with which Her Royal Highness gave effect to her feelings on the occasion. Many an older, as well as younger, man than Lord Clarendon, who had not his interest in the Princess Royal, was quite as unable as himself to repress his emotion at that which was so touching, because so unaffected and sincere.'

Lord Granville experienced the same impression. His words are briefer and go even further. 'One of the most touching sights ever seen was the Princess's salute of the King,' he wrote. Lord Clarendon felt himself bound to add to his report that, 'if His Majesty (of Prussia) had the mind, the judgment, and the foresight of the Princess Royal, there would be nothing to fear, and the example and influence of Prussia would soon be marvellously developed.' Lord Clarendon was speaking after having been honoured by 'a long conversation' with the Princess Royal. He had been 'more than ever astonished at the *statesmanlike* and comprehensive views which she takes of the policy of Prussia, both internal and foreign, and of the *duties* of a Constitutional King.'

The Crown Princess's views on these subjects astonished Prussians even more than they astonished Lord Clarendon. But, while the only sentiments called up in his Lordship were of respectful wonder, the Prussians were struck dumb with their own dark thoughts. We may, perhaps, believe in this courtier's glowing description of the homage, since he is corroborated by another, though we cannot fail to be struck by his cheap flattery and the meagreness of his own *statesmanlike* perception when writing the end of his report.

The scene in Königsberg Chapel was dazzling. Altar, Throne, canopies, and hangings were a pattern of scarlet and gold, and the sunlight poured through the high Gothic windows, lighting the diamonds and the soft colours of

the women's gowns, the massed red velvet cloaks of the Knights of the Black Eagle and the rainbow uniforms of every army in Europe.

With great skill, Vicky describes to her mother what to her was the most poignant moment. 'The King looked so very handsome and so noble with the crown on—it seemed to suit him exactly. The Queen, too, looked beautiful and did all she had to do with perfect grace and looked so *vornhem*. The moment when the King put the crown on the Queen's head was so touching that I think there was hardly a dry eye in the church.'

Evidently, King William was much pleased that day with his lovely daughter-in-law. After the solemn procession with five military bands had reached the Schloss Hof, and the waving banners and roaring crowds were behind, the old man gave her a locket with a strand of his hair. He told her before the assembly that he made her 2nd Chef of the *Death's Head* Hussars. The Crown Princess shrieked with laughter. There was consternation and amazement. 'I thought it was a joke,' she told her mother in her letter—though that she could have been so silly as to think this passes belief. If her sense of the ridiculous suggested that she was appointed *second cook* of the regiment, her lack of self-restraint was regrettable and unfortunate, for that peal of laughter was not forgotten. But she gives her mother no explanation for her amusement at such an ordinary honorary appointment.

Her description of the State banquet is interesting for the picture it gives of the elaborate ritual of the Prussian Court. 'We were waited upon by our *Kammerherren* (ladies-in-waiting) and Pages—the King being waited upon by the *Oberhofchargen*, our ladies stood behind our chairs—after the first two dishes are round the King asks to drink, and that is the signal for the ladies and gentlemen to leave the room and go to dinner, while the Pages of Honour continue to serve the whole dinner, really wonderfully well, poor boys—considering it is no easy task.'

They returned from Königsberg to the tiring Court cere-

monies of Berlin. But now Queen Augusta filled the place which Queen Elizabeth had cherished with stern venom for so many years. The new Crown Princess had come to believe that her mother-in-law was her friend and, indeed, she had been so in the first place. She therefore embarked in her new dignity on the now-familiar Court routine, believing that just as the political future looked more hopeful with the change of monarchs, so the days ahead would be happier for herself under the kindly sway of Queen Augusta. She was disappointed.

When the crown came to rest on Augusta's head her true character came out. She became instantly a true Prussian Queen. The Crown Princess discovered that she no longer enjoyed the intimacy of her mother-in-law. There was, as a matter of fact, yet another reason why Augusta grew colder to her son's wife. She was beginning to understand her daughter-in-law. Augusta believed that Vicky was slowly building a barrier between herself and her son; and she was right. After the first few months in Prussia her daughter-in-law had ceased altogether to come to her for advice and approval. She had gone her own way—and it was not the way of a Prussian wife. She was leading Fritz into her way of thinking, so that he was becoming more restrained in the presence of his father and mother.

The time was now fast approaching when Vicky had to bear the first cruel blow in her life. It came in the form of a telegram from Windsor early in the morning of December 15th.

Just after Windsor Castle clock had struck the quarter to eleven on the previous night the Prince Consort had died in his candle-lit room, with his wife kneeling in dumb horror at his head and the older children kneeling at his feet. He was only forty-two. Nobody had expected that the illness which had kept him in bed for several weeks would kill him.

The Queen had been hardly sane as she rushed from the corpse, tore frenziedly up to the nursery and clutched baby Beatrice from her cot. For a month they feared for her reason. For years the shock made her a shrinking neurotic,

tortured by her own self-obsession. Yet there is some reason to believe that, despite this shattering storm of grief, the death of Prince Albert struck her daughter Vicky with more shocking force than in reality it did his wife. Selfishness was the motive for the wife's insane grief. That was not the case where the daughter was concerned.

At Osborne, in that nightmare month after the death of the Consort, Alice struggled with her agonized and bewildered mother. In Berlin Fritz tended helplessly a wife in the same condition.

Vicky was not merely the most cherished fruit of her father's body; she was also part of his mind and of his soul. 'You don't know,' she had once written to Bertie, 'how one longs for a note from him when one is distant.' If Albert thought at all in his last moments it was probably that he would see her no more, rather than that he was leaving his wife. In her father's presence Vicky found peace. Even with Fritz, whom she dearly loved, her mind was always restless for action. But it was this fierce vitality which, on the one hand, brought the Princess Royal comparatively quickly out of the grief-stricken coma, that, on the other hand, enveloped her mother for years. Those who knew her well believed that Vicky was never quite the same after the death of her father. The truth was that the daughter without her father grew inwardly less confident and, therefore, it was her misfortune that she became outwardly more dynamic. She emerged from her grief a shade more bitter and harder, perhaps, and more prone to feel lonely when she began to know that she was misunderstood. Perhaps it was unfortunate, too, that the delicate task of bringing up William during the years that leave the deepest impression fell to her immediately after her father's death instead of during his lifetime.

That year the Crown Princess was hardly seen in Prussia. In the first few months she shrank from meeting anybody. Then she was in an advanced stage of pregnancy. In August her second son Henry was born at the New Palace. In the meantime, in July, Princess Alice had been married to

prematurely bald, good-natured Prince Louis of Hesse, son and heir of the aged Grand Duke. Fritz had crossed to England for the ceremony which took place in the dining-room at Windsor, since the Queen refused to expose herself to any but the Family. She invested the affair with all the harrowing circumstances of a nightmare funeral. Oceans of tears were shed. The cowed bridegroom was entirely shattered by the dismal scene. The bride was dismissed in no frame of mind for a honeymoon. But the coming of Alice to make her home in Germany, and within comparatively easy visiting distance, was a great joy to the Crown Princess. Her isolation was no longer such a real thing. She was not the only English wife among these strange people. That she was a *Prussian*, not an *English*, wife and that it was her task to identify herself with her husband's race, never to the end of her days became apparent to the eldest daughter of Queen Victoria and Prince Albert.

v

In the Prussian Reichstag trouble was stirring. As the year grew older it blew up into a fierce tempest. Grief and child-bearing took the attention of the Princess Royal from the political scene. When, toward the autumn, she did turn in that direction, she experienced a shock. Her father-in-law no longer appeared as the Liberal sovereign. A grim old junker was demanding from the representatives of his people a vast sum of money to remodel the army, to which as a simple officer he had devoted his life. Behind him the generals and the feudal landowners ranged themselves against the people with traditional scorn. The Reichstag defied the King! To what purpose could the reorganized Prussian Army be put? They could suggest a better use for the nation's money. There was a man in Paris who believed he knew how to handle a super-Prussian Army and King William I knew of that man. He dismissed the Reichstag. He was going to rule as he intended in spite of his people. He scorned the oath to the Constitution of 1848 that he had

solemnly taken a few months before. He named Count von Bismarck Minister-President and Minister of Foreign Affairs. He gave him supreme power. He was to return from the Paris Embassy immediately.

The giant Major of Dragoons, with the brooding, empty gaze, dismounted from the train at Berlin. The bulging eyes played scornfully through hooded eyelids upon the human sheep jostling about him. He towered over the silent members of the newly-summoned Reichstag.

"It is not with speeches or with parliamentary resolutions that the great questions of the day are decided," he told them. "It is with *blood and iron* ! "

Was it the imagination of the electrified deputies or was it reality that members near the speaker had witnessed a truly satanic flash blaze across the dead blue eyes as Bismarck ground out his last words ?

Count von Bismarck moved into the drawing-room of the Princess Royal, propelling himself with a series of jerks like a clockwork mechanism, his huge body as lifeless as his terrible eyes. It was the steadfast policy of his life to treat women as a negligible quantity. He was interested to see the *Engländerin*. He had called her that more and more persistently, as letters to Paris had added new details about her doings. He was going to treat the *Engländerin* as the negligible quantity. He knew that of all weapons *indifference* is usually the most baffling for the foe to counter. Still, he was very anxious to see this clever daughter of Queen Victoria ; for deep down inside he was fearful of the menace to the destiny of Prussia which might come from the *Engländerin*. Outwardly, he must disregard, but he would have to keep perpetual watch. Her voluble *naïveté* perplexed his secretive nature.

She was cordial enough at their meeting. Could it be that this girl was actually treating him with studied flippancy ? Did she imagine that this was a conversation between two intellectual equals ?—a woman of the world talking to a man of the world ? At any rate, when he heavily bowed himself out he knew that she thought of him as an adversary.

In time he would discover whether he, for his part, would have to regard her in that light.

Here are Bismarck's own words on the Crown Princess. 'Even soon after her arrival in Germany, in February 1858, I became convinced, through members of the Royal House and from my own observations, that the Princess was prejudiced against me personally. The fact did not surprise me as much as the form in which her prejudices against me had been expressed in the narrow family circle—"she did not trust me." I was prepared for antipathy on account of my alleged anti-English feelings and by reason of my refusal to obey English influences, but I was obliged to conclude that she had subsequently allowed herself to be influenced in her judgment of my character by further-reaching calumnies.'

Bismarck had the Liberals in mind—the familiar guests in the Crown Prince's Palace, when he spoke of 'further-reaching calumnies.' The Crown Prince had long been aware that, although Bismarck was away in Paris, his name was one to conjure with among the reactionaries. That the Crown Princess should have admitted unguardedly to the wrong people that she 'did not trust' this man whom she had never seen was quite in character, and that she should have used this particular phrase about Bismarck was equally understandable for these were the exact words which her father had uttered about the enigmatic Prussian after a long conversation with him in Paris, before his daughter had set foot in Prussia.

Robert Morier of our Berlin Legation here obtrudes himself. This sleek young man was a protégé of Prince Albert. If the Prince's schemes in regard to the future of Germany had not been explained so fully to Robert Morier as they had to the Princess Royal, Morier, nevertheless, by virtue of his brilliance, made it plain to the Consort that he comprehended him perfectly. Therefore a place had to be found for Morier among the staff of the Berlin Legation. Morier perceived his role to be that of a go-between with the Princess Royal on one side and the British Legation on the

other. He fulfilled his task admirably in the opinion of the Princess, and when Count Bismarck first called upon her he was well aware how familiar a sight was that of Morier's elegant figure ascending the steps of the Crown Prince's Palace.

Just as Bismarck was unwittingly persuaded by the Princess herself that she was the *evil genius* of her husband, so she likewise made him believe that Robert Morier, with his penetrating wit and his cool smile, was her *evil genius*. Actually, he was in the main nothing more than the intimate personal friend of herself and her husband. Bismarck thought Morier deep, and much blame was laid at his door for happenings about which he knew nothing. He was spied upon and his movements reported to 'the Chief,' as Bismarck soon came to be called by his silent-treading staff. Morier remains offstage throughout the drama and is only heard of through the whisperings of 'the Chief's' agents. Yet, although he never takes the stage, Robert Morier is of immense significance for, thanks to his own indiscreet manner and that of the Princess, he was Bismarck's nightmare. He very materially added fuel to the fire of suspicion and malice. Nothing better illustrates 'the Chief's' feelings toward Robert Morier, the friend of the *Englanderin*, than his action when, many years later, a new British Ambassador was required at Berlin. A comprehensive list of our diplomats considered to be fitted for the post was submitted to the German Chancellor by the Foreign Office, with a request for advice as to which would be preferred. Bismarck returned the list to London. A vehement pencil had crossed out one of the names. It was that of Sir Robert Morier. Any of the others would do.

Prussia settled down docilely under Bismarck. The Liberals who came to the Crown Princess's table had a pathetic, beaten look in their eyes ; or so it seemed to their hostess. Clearly, they placed all their hopes in the Crown Prince and Princess. The money of the people was pouring into the Exchequer. The great new Army of Prussia was coming into being. To what end was this Army being set

out? To awe the Prussian nation who were paying for it and filling its ranks? To overwhelm the States of Germany? To fight Europe? The two Royal Liberals watched with growing dismay.

In August, 1862, Queen Victoria sent Bertie to cruise in the Mediterranean in the *Victoria and Albert*, and she asked the Crown Prince and Princess of Prussia to join him. Her reason for wanting to get Bertie out of the way was that she had summoned Alix of Denmark for ten days of quiet talk at Windsor. It was now definitely decided that Bertie should marry Christian of Denmark's daughter in the following spring. The less Bertie saw of his fiancée until that time the better, thought his mother. She did not want him at Windsor. He would be a disturbing influence in the quiet talks which were to take place. And it was very important that Alix should devote her whole attention to what her future mother-in-law had to say. Besides, if Bertie had stayed at Windsor it might have looked rude if she had not asked Prince Christian, who had brought his daughter over, to stay on at the Castle, for there would have been a male host to entertain him. As it was, she knew he would understand that she was too weak to sit at the table with a gentleman who was almost a stranger to her, so that he would not mind returning immediately to Denmark and coming to fetch Alix when her stay was at an end.

There was a good deal which Alix had to be told about Bertie. The crucial motif of the talks was to make Alix see, once and for all, that from the day she married Bertie she must totally *cease to be a Dane*, even in her innermost thoughts. This was especially necessary at the moment because, ever since Count Bismarck had returned to Berlin, the signs were growing more ominous that Prussia and Austria had designs on the troubled States of Schleswig-Holstein which, rightly or wrongly, Denmark claimed for her own. Before long, Prince Christian might be King of Denmark and England did not want to go to war for the sake of Denmark. The Queen could see that, if such a war broke

out, it was going to be exceedingly awkward for herself if Alix remained the least bit Danish, for Alix would certainly convert Bertie to her way of thinking and Bertie would talk loudly about his views everywhere and the Continental Press would report the sayings of the Prince of Wales; meanwhile, Vicky in Berlin would be on the other side, and it would be very difficult for the Queen of England to keep her finger in the Prussian pie.

The year passed uneventfully for the Crown Prince and Princess of Prussia, but their minds were by no means at rest. They could see the black storm-clouds gathering, summoned by Bismarck, the evil magician. The glowing horizon was vanishing.

They arrived at Windsor in the wintry March of 1863. Bertie was to be married in Windsor Castle Chapel on the 10th. William came with them. He was three now, a pretty, pale, girlish little boy with glossy hair. Already his eyes were lit with the sharp, bitter, searching glance which so often marks the cripple. It was no longer possible to hide the useless left arm and the small withering hand.

All the panoply of State decked the wedding scene in St. George's Chapel. Only the dim black figure of the Queen, looking down from the gallery, reminded the glittering throng that one among them was thinking of the dead. She had refused to take her place in the chancel. She could not face the gaze of so many eyes. Besides, it was bitterly cold in the chancel, while in the gallery she could have a roaring fire in her new fire-place.

It was William's first public appearance. He was dressed in Highland costume. His small English uncle, Leopold, was in charge of him. The nephew did not behave well. He refused to stay in his place. His uncle had to admonish him. The nephew drew the dirk out of his stocking. Some people said that he attacked his uncle with it. Things were growing a trifle confused at that moment and there was no certainty about it. But many people witnessed Prince William pull the cairngorm out of the top of his dirk and throw it down hard in the middle of the flagstones of the aisle,

"How did dear little William behave himself, Leopold?" the Queen asked her son after the ceremony.

"He bit my leg," said the uncle angrily.

The Crown Prince and Princess and William, with Alice of Hesse and her husband, went with the Queen to stay at Balmoral and a photograph of William and his father taken there is still in existence. Father and son are kilted. The magnificent figure of the Prussian Crown Prince is in the perfect Highland tradition, calm and at ease, fit to stand beside John Brown or any of his mother-in-law's ghillies. William holds his hand, and it is easy to imagine this pale, pathetic, kilted little boy biting his Uncle Leopold and restlessly tearing the dirk from his stocking.

VI

William, or Willy, as his mother was beginning to call him, to the chagrin of 'Old Prussians,' has now arrived at an age when his management has become an affair of extreme importance. What happens to him from this time until his middle teens cannot fail to have its bearing on the future. He is a cripple. His young intelligence is keen and ardent. He is like his mother. Thanks to the miserable arm he at times feels cruel pains over the left side of the face, the ear, and the head. One side of his brain is touched by this, with the result that to some extent he is the victim of mental instability, an affliction which betrays him throughout his life.

Here is a delicate case, especially if the boy has got to be a king, and a king, moreover, with the will and strength to carry on from his father, or himself carry through, the great German renaissance dreamed of by the Prince Consort. The personal relations between Fritz and Vicky being such as they have come to be, it is inevitable that the bringing-up of this precious child shall come almost wholly into the hands of his mother. Probably, only the guidance of a very gentle and very wise woman would enable this cripple truly to find himself and thereby place the world in proper perspective.

His mother was not ungentle in her heart. Wisdom was in her rich intellect, if she stopped to search for it. Unhappily, her eagerness to make Willy the Prince and King *par excellence* outweighed her prudence. The delicate case had not got to be watched, guided, and moulded until its best elements came to the top. It had got to be crushed, obliterated and stimulated until mentally and, God willing, physically it had ceased to be a delicate case at all.

"Up to my seventh year," the Kaiser has himself said, "my education was in female hands, but none too tender." The superintendent of the nursery was Countess Reventlow, but the person who really presided over all happenings in that quarter was his mother. She was in perfect accord with Fräulein von Dobeneck, the tall and scraggy governess and instructress, who later became known to the family as 'Dokka.' Willy hated 'Dokka' from the first. She was fond of rapping the palm of his hand with a cane, and there were stories in Berlin that she used her cane on another part of his quivering anatomy for more serious offences.

The Crown Princess was supposed to look on with approval upon these occasions, just as it was said a few years later, when Hintzpeter the tutor was paramount, that she had been seen to come out of the schoolroom, harsh-eyed and thin-lipped, after sounds of fierce castigation had been heard. Certainly, the Princess did approve of smacking the outstretched palm. She had herself suffered from its sting in the nursery. The custom was not unknown in Prussia, but the idea that it should have a recognized place in the regime of a Royal nursery was entirely English and entirely shocking.

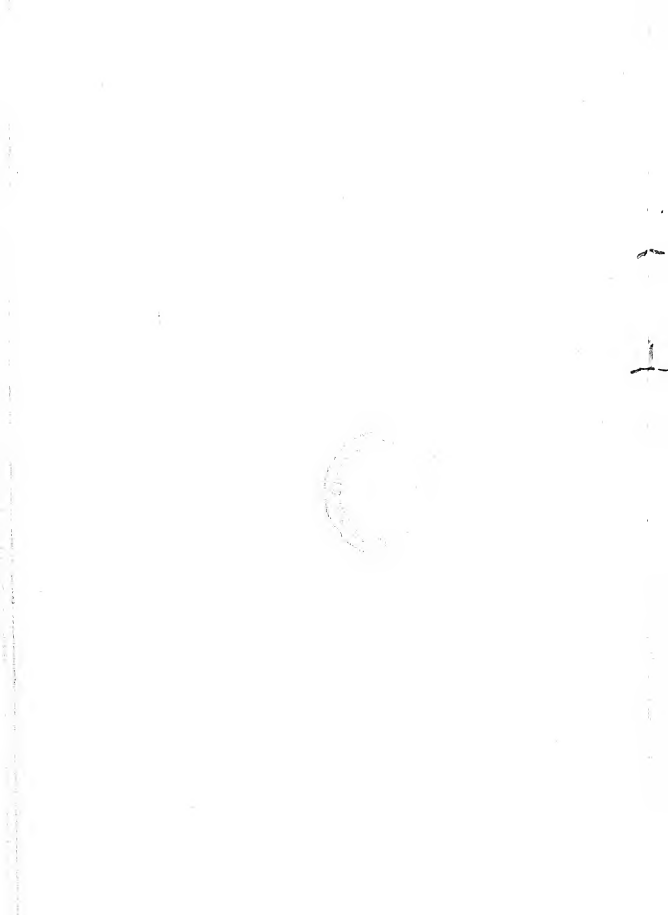
One of the tales which went the rounds about this rite in the Crown Princess's nursery is certainly amusing. Willy was ordered by von Dobeneck to put out his hand. He caught the cane when it descended, jerked it away, and smacked her in a tender portion of her anatomy. His mother was instantly summoned. Atonement could only be made by applying the cane in the same way to Willy. His mother administered the punishment herself. He took the caning philoso-



THE PRINCESS ROYAL IN THE YEAR OF
HER MARRIAGE



From a pencil sketch
PRINCESS FREDERICK WILLIAM OF PRUSSIA
WITH HER SON WILLIAM



phically and listened sullenly to his mother's lecture, which followed it. " This has hurt me as much as it has hurt you, Willy," she said finally.

Willy looked at her hard. He was of a solemn, inquiring turn of mind.

" Does it hurt you in the same place as it hurts me ? " he asked.

The Kaiser has left it on record in his memoirs that he suffered ' excruciating pain ' in his nursery days from the endless treatments which were applied to his arm. He could not help associating these with his mother for she was nearly always present to superintend the specialists, and it was she who scolded him into being brave. The Princess was continually being assured that these treatments were likely to be of little use, as proved to be the case ; but she insisted on their being continued until, a few years later, she changed her methods and summoned Captain von Dresky of the Central Military Gymnastic Institute. Once again she was present to watch and advise while von Dresky's ruthless exercises roused a hate against her in her agonized son, transcending even that which he had felt for the doctors.

We shall insert here the Kaiser's own opinion of his mother, written many years after her death and long after the memory of bitter conflict between them had mellowed, but significant here, nevertheless, because impressions begin to form when young, and by inspecting this we can gain some idea of how the Kaiser saw his mother in childhood.

' My mother,' he says, ' was a woman of unwearied energy, she was passionate, impulsive, argumentative, and had an undeniable love of power. Hintzpeter (the tutor) told me that during the first ten years of her married life she was wrapped up in the husband she adored ; she was wife rather than mother, and her three elder children had a stern upbringing. Her younger children, who knew her as a tender mother, idolized her. The death of my brother Sigismund may have helped to bring this about after 1870. . . . Only too truly did her brother King Edward say of her

that in Germany she praised everything English, in England everything German.'

Kaiser William II has written very copious memoirs covering the whole of his life. It is significant that in the volume devoted to his early years he dwells on his unhappiness but seldom mentions his mother, while he is continually recalling items about his father in terms of deep affection and pleasure. Indeed, she might almost not have existed until the day arrived when open war broke out between them and then he has much to tell about her. Since we know from his mother's own words, as well as from a host of other witnesses, that she was throughout this period playing a constant part in his life, we cannot overlook this silence of the son to whom in her own mind she was devoting more care than to any of her other children.

We return to the crippled left arm ; for that is the primary cause of all the tragedy. By the attempted treatment he suffered extreme torture at a tender age, but he was not too young to understand that it was his mother who was responsible for this, and that she was not sympathetic. The cure was the thing ; the way in which it was obtained would pass into oblivion. Willy became a martyr in his infantile mind and inside him he began to harbour resentment which went far beyond his mother, extending instinctively to everything around him. An early experience of this kind may set in train complicated and disastrous reactions in the adult character of the victim. Worse than that, the mother by her clumsiness made him realize that his left arm was a shameful thing and to be concealed. She herself was ashamed of her son's arm.

This was the first great psychological error. Had William been taught to make no attempt to hide his crippled arm which, in fact, could not be hidden, nor, in all probability, cured, he might have reached manhood without that fatal inferiority complex which drove him to such calamitous actions.

It was inevitable that a small boy thus crippled must grow up with a certain shrinking from and envy of those who

were stronger and healthier than he. How did the Crown Princess set out to counteract this misfortune? By teaching William that he was no son of hers if he did not emulate and, indeed, triumph over those who enjoyed the blessing denied by Fate to him. On the surface her efforts achieved almost miraculous success. William the cripple strutted before the world, a magnificent shot, an excellent cavalry officer, a fine swimmer, a man of dynamic word and action; all this despite the amazing fact that he had one useless arm and a withered hand. So much for the outward man; inside him his soul was in tatters.

Further reflection might have persuaded the mother to build a stout soul in the boy, with appreciation of himself as he really was and an assessment of his true worth in relation to those around him. Instead of that, she dedicated everything to creating the outward automaton, while trying to graft on this her own high ideals, which ran contrary to the growing hardness and aggressiveness of William's outlook. If his mother had made him see that outward show was not of real importance and that it was character—the inner soul—alone that mattered in meeting the problems of life, there would have been hope for him.

The almost-sinister Hintzpeter, the tutor with whom the Crown Princess was so closely in touch and of whom much has to be said, complained of 'the resistance called forth in him (William) by any sort of pressure . . . the gentlest mental discipline was resisted to the utmost by that elusive nature . . . *only the most extreme severity availed to overcome the resistance.*' The italics are the author's. It was not the way of the grim tutor to persevere in 'the gentlest mental discipline.' His energetic code was 'extreme severity'—the ruthless inhuman thrust of a pile-driver. And here he saw eye to eye with William's mother.

But that resistance which was overcome in a small boy by the 'extreme severity' of his tutor and his mother, with his father ineffectually standing aside to let them have their way, was not really overcome at all. It created within him a *lifelong* resistance!

Emil Ludwig, in his famous biography of William II, has pointed out that these traits in the boy's character could either have been guided into 'dignity and self-reliance' or driven into 'arrogance and despotism.' The latter happened. Ludwig has referred to the 'coldheartedness of a despotic mother.' Since he wrote, the letters of the Empress Frederick have come to light and Ludwig is said to have admitted that his words in regard to William's mother were unjust and exaggerated. Her friends have unhesitatingly called his words slanderous.

Ludwig, when he wrote, was retailing the opinions of contemporaries of the Empress Frederick, who were undoubtedly prejudiced in many cases. Yet, in actuality, Ludwig's words were not far from the truth. He conjured up a picture of the mother as a cold, hard, almost vicious woman. There is something memorably evil in his portrait; and without a shade of doubt Vicky's letters to her mother prove that she was not this. But much the same appearance—that of 'a coldhearted, despotic mother'—is too easily assumed by one with great intensity of purpose and affection toward the victim, by one who is a passionately self-willed idealist, convinced that the end in sight can only be achieved under the cloak of coldhearted despotism. To herself she is exonerated by the keenness of her own conviction, but this does not make the unhappy object of her endeavours appreciate her motives and her affection, even if he is sensitive enough to understand what is taking place.

Even the best friends of the Empress Frederick admit that she blindly overrode everyone, unthinking, convinced instinctively that she, at least, was right. "I wish I were a man. I would use my fists. I love a fight!" and similar phrases spring from her exultant lips when faced with difficulties. She tells her mother how happy she is that Willy and she are on such perfect terms of affection. But she has written the words without stopping to think of Willy's affection at all. She has imperiously set down her own feelings for Willy. Therefore, she conceives that Willy must feel the same toward her. Perhaps those blatant words

would have made the pale, girlish boy shrink if he had read them at the time.

It has been said that the mother could not forgive the deformity of her son. It is truer to say that, like any mother, she could not forget it. To a greater or less extent every mother who brings a crippled child into the world bears a grudge against Fate ; which grudge in a mother of strong, impulsive nature may at times spring to the surface and reveal itself to the crippled child, as if he were responsible for inflicting himself upon her. There is no doubt that this did happen in the case in question, and Willy probably never forgot. Judging from all that took place subsequently it is hardly exaggeration to suppose that in his heart he never forgave her.

On top of this the Crown Princess committed that subtle, although unconscious, mistake which made failure certain in her careful plan for the creation of William as the perfect man ; the embodiment of her father. She did the one thing which forbade the possibility of her son's co-operation. No matter how deep was her real affection for William, she allowed him to feel stunted of this in the welter of admonition and stern instruction, while showing in full measure her love for the younger children. The normal urge of motherhood would tend to give greater affection to the weakling of the brood, but the Crown Princess was no ordinary woman—hers was the soaring intelligence of a man who moves at the head of nations.

How far she actually did despise William, and whether she did feel a lesser love for him than for the younger children, it is difficult to gauge. Sometimes, as we shall see, she expressed to others her deep attachment to William, and again, in moments of provocation, she spoke of him in a tone of shocking disdain, such as no mother with respect for herself should apply to her child. Certainly, William became conscious of this apparent lack of love when very young, and that contemporaries of the Crown Princess received the same impression is beyond dispute. The self-pity and loneliness, which are always in the soul of a weakling, stabbed William

the more cruelly when he persuaded himself that the beautiful mother who would never leave him alone because of his affliction and his exalted position, was all the while much happier in the company of the other children than in his own.

It is a tragic matter when any son grows up harbouring a secret grudge against his mother. When, later, circumstances arise which cause a sharp difference of opinion between mother and son, the sleeping resentment of the child may flame into an irruption of fierce and irrational hatred. When the mother is of one nation and the son of another ; when the mother has for years tired and aggravated the child with her beliefs that her own people are superior to those of the father with whom he is on more intimate terms of affection ; and when, to crown this, he forms the conclusion that his mother is trying to estrange him from his father, then it is inevitable that his hatred shall go beyond his mother to include her countrymen and the land from which she sprang.

The years are approaching when the upbringing of Prince William becomes the motif of the tapestry. To grasp the significance of the detail it is essential to know the psychological ground upon which mother and son were beginning to approach one another.

VII

‘ Every kind of calumny was spread respecting the persons supposed to be the Prince’s friends. Spies were placed over him in the shape of aides-de-camp and chamberlains ; conversations were distorted and imagined, till the Danzig episode brought matters to a climax and very nearly led to the transfer of the Prince to a fortress.’

These are the words of the shadowy Morier about the affairs surrounding the Crown Prince and Princess in the early months of 1863. They had done nothing decisive to incur any man’s displeasure. Everything was whispers. But Count Bismarck thought the matter sufficiently grave

to insinuate a spy into their household. Profoundly startled as he was at the happenings in that sweltering June, a certain unholy joy must have seized him at the discovery that he had been justified in his precautions.

It was June 1st. The Crown Prince was making a tour of garrison inspections throughout Prussia. The Crown Princess was at the New Palace, packing her luggage to join him at Graudenz next day. That was the day Bismarck had chosen to issue his first repressive decree—the ordinance muzzling the public Press. It struck the politically minded, liberal Crown Princess like a physical blow. She was white and quivering with indignation. Now she knew beyond all doubt that Bismarck was the enemy. Something must be done. Fritz had hesitated long enough to declare himself openly. He was the champion of the Liberty of Prussia. He must own to it!

She joined him at Graudenz on June 2nd. Exactly what she said to Fritz remained a secret between them. On the morning of June 5th Bismarck was summoned to the King's Palace. The eyes of his Royal master burned with rage. He thrust a letter into the Chancellor's hands. It was from the Crown Prince. It expressed strong disapproval of his father's decree. The measure was a contradiction of the oath he had taken at the coronation and of his own previously stated principles. It infringed the liberties of the People. He further complained that his position as Crown Prince and Heir Apparent was belittled. He had not been summoned to the Crown Council at which the project had been debated. He had not been informed of the decision taken. In conclusion, he would await impatiently a letter from his father, as a result of which he hoped the matter would become more palatable. Never before had the old man had a difference with his son. He was profoundly shocked and enraged at this defiance of the Throne. He was deeply mortified. His uneasy sense of guilt at his own weakness fanned the flames of his resentment.

Bismarck said little. He was faintly amused. The letter

was harmless. It was his turn to be enraged when he read the papers next morning.

The Crown Prince and Princess had reached Danzig on the 5th. There, before an assembly of notables, the Crown Prince had publicly denounced the Royal ordinance concerning the Press. He had declared his profound dissatisfaction at his father's decision. It was nothing more nor less than public defiance of the Throne by the King's eldest son. Crown Prince Frederick William had come forward openly as the leader of the Prussian Liberals. Bismarck saw that the situation was latent with dangerous possibilities for his own ambitions. It would need to be cunningly handled. King William was almost beside himself with rage. He gnawed and tugged at his drooping whiskers. He talked of inflicting condign punishment and humiliation on his rebel son. It was treachery—treason, almost!

Exactly what had happened at Danzig was this. The Crown Prince and Princess had been met at the station by von Winter, the chief Burgomaster. He was not only an intimate friend who on his Berlin visits was constantly in attendance at their home, but also one of Prussia's most militant Liberals. Von Winter was to make an address of welcome to the Crown Prince and Princess in the Town Hall. The Prince would have to answer him. He suggested to Frederick William that he would so word his speech of welcome that, in replying, the Prince would have a good excuse for bluntly stating in public his attitude to the new Press ordinances.

Evidently, the performance of this bold act of defiance caught the imagination of the Crown Princess. Almost certainly, Frederick hesitated. This kind of lightning stroke was not in his studied programme of resistance. It would have been wiser if he had determined to keep it out of the programme. Hot-blooded charges too often give victory to a steady foe. He was one of Prussia's best soldiers. He should have remembered that.

He made his speech to about eighty notables in the Town Hall. Some of them agreed with his sentiments. All of

them listened with horror and amazement while the Crown Prince criticized his Royal father. Standing beside him, the Crown Princess gazed triumphantly over her huge bouquet at the breathless audience.

The story was all round Danzig within the hour. That night the telegraph flashed it to Berlin. The newspaper stories were garbled and exaggerated.

There can be no doubt as to the part the Princess played in the drama. 'I did *all I could* to induce Fritz to do so,' she told her mother exultantly in her letter of the 8th, 'knowing how necessary it was that he should *once* express his sentiments openly and disclaim having any part in the last measures of the Government.'

Her fighting spirit was up. She wrote in a haze of righteous indignation as she recounted the consequences. She was a little sorry for poor Fritz, who was falling into one of the black fits of despair for which he was celebrated among his friends, and before long she was going to be sorry for herself. A ferocious letter had come from the King. He had treated Fritz like a naughty boy. It was humiliating. After blasting him for his disobedience, his father had demanded that he instantly retract his words by public announcement in every newspaper. If he did not do this he would be recalled. He must resign his military appointments, all his offices and his place on the Council. Other dire penalties, such as banishment, were threatened.

That the King had not dealt more summarily with his son from the start was thanks to Bismarck. It was the moment to walk cunningly. All Prussia knew of the Crown Prince's speech. Probably half Prussia secretly sympathized with him. The martyrdom of the Crown Prince and Princess offered the most dreaded possibilities. Nothing would better further the wavering cause of Liberalism. So Bismarck thought of his Bible. Out of his childhood memories he fished up the perfect text.

'Deal tenderly with the boy Absalom,' he quoted sardonically to the enraged patriarch.

The Crown Prince was to be scolded like a child. The

defiant act, at which Bismarck himself seethed with a fiercer resentment than his master, was to be forgotten. It was Count Bismarck's first masterpiece, one of his few impromptu masterpieces. He had surmounted the first obstacle which marked the map of the Future that he had drawn for himself—Liberalism. For, at the vital moment when Prussian Liberalism passed from the canter into the charge, it was brought up dead. It was scorned and of no account in the eyes of all men. It never recovered from that act of cool forbearance.

Had that rash speech never been made, as there is little doubt it never would have been made but for the impetuosity of Fritz's wife ; had the cause of Liberalism been gently and skilfully cultivated by the Crown Prince and Princess, then not only the history of Prussia but the history of the world might have followed smoother paths.

All through the night of the 7th Fritz had sat up writing an answer to his father. His conscience forbade him to retract his words, but he was willing to submit to any punishment his father might decide upon, and he was heart-broken that he had given him so much pain. Captain von Luccadon left with the letter for Berlin in the early morning.

'What the upshot of this will be, Heaven knows,' Vicky informed her mother. She is still exultant, but the tone is fading to self-pity. 'Fritz has done his duty and has nothing to reproach himself with. We feel dreadfully alone, not having a soul from whom to ask advice. How unhappy I am to see him so worried, I cannot say ; but I shall stand by him as is my duty, and advise him to do his in the face of all the Kings and Emperors of the whole world. The way in which the Government behave and the way in which they have treated Fritz, rouse my every feeling of *independence*. Thank God I was born in England, where people are not born slaves, and too good to allow themselves to be treated as such.'

A few days later the Queen heard that they were 'well-nigh worn out with mental fatigue, anxiety, and excitement of the most painful kind. I was ill all yesterday and still feel very

confused ! We are in this painful position without a secretary, without a single person to give advice, to write for us, or help us.' Whatever they did was abused 'one way or the other.' The Liberal papers had been forbidden them. They did not know what was going on. 'As for coming to you, dear Mama, we can decide nothing.' The King had not replied. Their fate was in the balance. 'I can hardly say how grateful we shall be to be once again with you, in that blessed country of peace and happiness. . . . I do not mind any difficulties so long as they end well for Fritz ; indeed, I enjoy a pitched battle (when it comes to it) exceedingly.'

Vicky had sent to her mother a copy of Fritz's letter to his father. The Queen certainly approved, although she would unquestionably not have approved had Bertie enacted a similar performance in England. Although none of her letters of approval to her daughter are extant, we know she approved because she handed the letter to her Ministers, and said as much. Lord Russell expressed the considered opinion that the Crown Prince of Prussia had acted throughout the transaction in an entirely judicious manner. "With the Crown Princess by his side," he assured Her Majesty, "there seems no fear of his not being firm." From the 'old Prussian' viewpoint Bismarck was not unjustified in dreading the English influence.

Now, an interesting aspect of the Danzig sensation was that nobody at the time in Prussia knew exactly the part which the *Engländerin* had played in the transaction. Bismarck thought he knew, though he had not the smallest proof, for on August 2nd he entered thoughtfully in his memoranda,

'either she (the Crown Princess) has herself attained to definite views of her own as to the form of government most advantageous for Prussia . . . or she has succumbed to the concerted influences of the Anglo-Coburg combination. However this may be, it is asserted that she has decided upon a course of opposition to the present Government and has taken advantage of the Danzig incident and the excitement to which it has given rise in the highest

circles, in order to bring her consort more and more into prominence by these revelations, and to acquaint public opinion with the Crown Prince's way of thinking. *All this out of anxiety for the future of her consort.'*

The italics are the author's. He was almost tempted to put an exclamation mark at the end. That concentrated flash of irony can only mean that he had marked her as a woman of selfish ambition—and, in a way, he was perfectly right; but she was ambitious not for herself. She was ambitious for the sake of her father's memory, for the cause and salvation of Greater Germany.

In this case we know from Bismarck's intimates that he was seeing in his mind's eye the cynical smile of Robert Morier appearing over the shoulder of the *Engländerin*. Actually, the news of the Danzig incident came as a profound shock to Morier, for he said as much in a letter to his friend Ernest Stockmar, the secretary of the Crown Princess.

Bad as the Danzig speech was bound to be for the future relations between Bismarck and the Crown Princess, something came hot on its heels which further stirred the grim Prussian against her and her country. *The Times*—the famous 'Thunderer' to which all Europe listened in awful respect—came out with a remarkable statement which painted the Crown Princess in the worst possible light from the 'Old Prussian' standpoint. The statement was obviously a kind of clarion call to prove to the world that the Crown Prince and Princess of Prussia had taken the field on behalf of Prussian Liberalism and in defiance of the lawful Government of the State. The mysterious statement, obviously inspired by someone behind the scenes who must have been in touch with somebody else at Berlin, infuriated, but did not startle, Bismarck.

'While travelling on military duty, the Prince (of Prussia) allowed himself to assume an attitude antagonistic to the Sovereign, and to call in question his measures,' announced *The Times*. 'The least that he could do to atone for this grave offence was to retract his statements. This the King

demand of him by letter, adding that, if he refused, he would be deprived of his honours and officers. The Prince, in concert, it is said, with Her Royal Highness the Princess, met this demand with a firm answer. He refused to retract anything, offered to resign his honours and commands, and craved leave to withdraw with his wife and family to some place where he would be free from suspicion of the least connection with the affairs of State.

'This letter is described as a remarkable performance, and it is added that the Prince is to be congratulated on having a consort who not only shares his liberal views, but is also able to render him so much assistance in a momentous and critical juncture. It is not easy to conceive a more difficult position than that of the princely pair, placed without a single adviser between a self-willed Sovereign and a mischievous Cabinet on the one hand, and an incensed people on the other.'

The words 'without a single adviser' are especially interesting, although they would not have been so to contemporary readers of *The Times*. They are interesting because they are almost the identical words of complaint reiterated by Vicky in her letters to her mother. It might almost be imagined that the author of that inspired statement would not have thought of mentioning the *loneliness* of the Prussian pair if he had not read the letters or talked with someone who had done so.

Bismarck did not go so far as to suspect that by some roundabout means the accursed 'Thunderer'—which he already knew as his enemy—had received its inspired message from Osborne, but then he had not read the letters of the Crown Princess. He was firmly convinced that the statement had reached *The Times* from Ernest Stockmar, the secretary, who was possibly in collusion with Morier. Ernest Stockmar knew nothing about it. He perfectly realized the dangerous effect it must have on Anglo-Prussian relations, and that it was a misfortune for the Crown Princess. It seemed to him as if the stifling air of Berlin was alive with the angry buzzing of disturbed bees. He collapsed in a severe nervous

breakdown and was invalidated from Berlin for ever ; a grave loss to the Crown Princess for, besides being a dear friend, it has been said that his character was some check upon her.

Discussion was hot both at Osborne and at the New Palace as to whether King William was going to forbid Vicky and Fritz to visit England this year. A certain pleasurable martyrdom would have been felt on both sides of the water had he done so. But King William did not impose the Royal veto. They arrived at Balmoral early in September with Prince William and later returned in the Royal train with Her Majesty to Windsor. Husband and wife were alike happy to have left Prussia behind.

Fritz, for better or worse, is becoming very anglicized. The time has come when, like Vicky, he thinks it natural to talk of England as *home*. It might be thought that 'Old Prussia,' at least, did not miss the Crown Prince and Princess ; but it did do so. 'Old Prussia' found it incomprehensible and rather disgusting that the Crown Prince and Princess should absent themselves from *home* from September to December. The Crown Princess and her mother were responsible for keeping Frederick William away from his countrymen for so long ! Count Bismarck, busy in bringing to fruition the first part of his deep-laid plans for the glory of Prussia, was quite content for the Crown Prince and Princess to keep their distance.

VIII

It was bright and frosty on the morning of January 21st, 1864, when clouds of pale-blue Austrian cavalry, backed by the clustering pennons of the sombre Uhlan masses, swept across the frontier of the State of Holstein. Before them the outposts of the King of Denmark scattered, behind them the landscape crawled, a black sea of German *Pickelhaubes* and Austrian *shakos*. Prussia, Austria, and the States of the German Confederation were marching to succour the 'tormented' States of Schleswig-Holstein. General Wrangel

commanded the Army of invasion, and with him rode Crown Prince Frederick William, as his Chief of Staff.

The host of Prussia was there because it was Bismarck's design that it should be there. Austria was there because she was the rival of Prussia in the leadership of the German Confederation and she could not afford to be absent. The States of the German Confederation were there because Prussia, to gain swift victory, needed the overwhelming power of their armaments and because Bismarck's Press campaign had inflamed them at the heinousness of Denmark's treatment of Schleswig-Holstein.

Lord Palmerston said that only three men ever understood the vexed and baffling problem of Schleswig-Holstein. He was one of them. He had forgotten. The Prince Consort was another. He was dead. A German history professor was the third. He was in a lunatic asylum. Bismarck did not even try to understand it. His role was to settle. If done in the right way this would be to the material and strategic advantage of Prussia.

Briefly, the obvious facts about Schleswig-Holstein were these. Schleswig and Holstein were inhabited in the main by Germans and had come to be regarded as within the Danish sphere of influence. The late Hereditary Duke of Schleswig-Holstein, being weary of his patrimony or hard-up or both, had handed over the deeds of ownership for a money payment to the late King of Denmark. Frederick, the son of the Duke of Schleswig-Holstein, had become an officer in the Prussian Guards and, incidentally, a constant visitor at the home of the Crown Prince and Princess. Upon the death of his father Frederick published a proclamation throughout the German States that he did not recognize the financial transaction between the King of Denmark and his father, and that he claimed Schleswig-Holstein as its lawful Duke. In the meantime, the King of Denmark, unmoved, proceeded to impose various measures in Schleswig-Holstein which the German inhabitants found unpalatable. Holstein had for years sent representatives to the meetings of the German Confederation while Schleswig

did not, and this further complicated the problem. Holstein brought her troubles before the Confederation.

Bismarck had for some time thought that Schleswig-Holstein would be a useful appendage to Prussia, either as an independent dukedom under Prussian supervision or, better still, as a part of the new Prussia—a strategic bulwark of the north. He had also realized that sooner or later Prussia had got to challenge Austria if she wished to achieve the absolute leadership of the German Confederation. He knew that Austria was tired and decaying. Her martial splendour was an empty shell. It was possible that under the lusty hand of Francis Joseph she might improve herself. Therefore, the sooner she was challenged the better. The inevitable arguments which would arise after the reduction of Schleswig-Holstein by a Prusso-Austro-German army could almost certainly be moulded into good reasons for a war with Austria. The claims of Duke Frederick to Schleswig-Holstein were popular among Germans. Bismarck's Press campaign took the line which he knew would gain most popular interest. The Schleswig-Holsteiners were oppressed by Denmark. Good Germans should rise up to give them back their Duke by force of arms.

The Schleswig-Holstein affair was coming to a head in December when Vicky and Fritz were at Windsor. Meal-times were not happy for the Queen; for at meal-times embarrassing arguments broke out. For once Vicky and Fritz were in agreement, or thought themselves so, with Bismarck. Duke Frederick of Schleswig-Holstein was their dear 'house-friend.' Vicky was certain that Duke Frederick was in the right. She said so with unshakable energy. Alix, whose father was now King Christian of Denmark, was fierce for the claims of Denmark; until the heavy frown of Her Majesty froze her volubility into one obstinate phrase which she refused to swallow. "The Duchies belong to Papa!" she reiterated patiently. In this view Bertie was her ardent disciple.

Vicky's mother must have been somewhat astonished at her daughter's change of front soon after she returned to

Prussia. It was becoming clear that Bismarck had forgotten the claims of Duke Frederick, the 'house-friend.' Prussians were gradually coming to realize that it was the claim of *Prussia* to at least a quarter of the Schleswig-Holstein States which constituted the only perfectly comprehensible item in the vexed problem.

Nothing better demonstrates the mercurial mind of the Princess Royal than her desertion of the 'house-friend,' and her intense conviction that Prussia was right. *She* understood the Schleswig-Holstein question! 'My thoughts and convictions are with Fritz Augustenberg (the house-friend),' she wrote to Windsor on January 5th. Shortly afterwards, when everybody knew that Fritz Augustenberg's star was no longer in the ascendant, the perplexed mother read: 'It is impossible to blame an English person for not understanding the Schleswig-Holstein question. It remains nevertheless to us Germans plain and simple as daylight and one for which we would gladly bring any sacrifice.'

A large part of England, enchanted by the lovely Alix, was outspokenly pro-Dane. It was even said that King Christian would never have dared to go to war if he had not thought England would support him. Bertie went about rejoicing before all and sundry when Danish troops gained small local successes. The words of the Prince of Wales, much magnified, floated across the Continent to Germany. The Queen was firm that not one volunteer must reach Denmark and not one word of encouragement must go to Prussia. Bismarck, and therefore Prussia, was nervous and angry. If England joined Denmark plans would go badly astray. England had given Prussia a Crown Princess. England ought to stand by Prussia.

In mind and in action the Crown Princess was an ardent Prussian. Her brilliant work in organizing the disgusting hospitals proved that she had diligently studied Florence Nightingale's achievement in the Crimea. But when she heard England vilified she angrily argued in support of the English standpoint. At once she was identified with brother Bertie. Her enthusiasm for the war was merely a mask to

curry favour. She wanted to stir up the sympathy of the wretched Liberals. 'Old Prussians' were much more interested to observe that she still wore London bonnets and mantles and gowns. That showed where a woman's true feelings lay. During the Danish War Vicky identified herself with Prussia as never before. But, at the same time, she was calling Prussian surgeons dirty and ignorant, which was true, and earning the hatred of every Mother Gamp in the kingdom. At the end of the Danish War she was more unpopular than before it began and in much she had herself to blame.

There is something pathetic, even ridiculous, in her Prussian indignation against England, while behind her back the ill-will of the Prussians stirred against her. 'Absurd—rude—violent—unjust!' was her opinion of the anti-Prussian Press of London. 'Hysterical fussiness!' was the term she applied to the constant inquiries that the English ambassadors made in Berlin and Vienna. 'The continual meddling of England in other people's affairs has become so ridiculous that it ceases to annoy,' she scribbled to her mother. 'The philanthropic and virtuous tone in which attacks against Prussia are made has something intensely ridiculous about it. The English would not like it if they were engaged in a war, to be dictated to in a pompous style. . . .'

In actuality, Vicky conducted herself throughout the war with admirable selflessness. It was the first long parting from Fritz. She pined for him. She was alone among foreigners. She was deeply frightened. When dense masses of soldiery volleyed into one another, when cannon shot blazed lanes through the packed ranks, the place of a general was near his withering battalions. As for the war itself, it would have ended quicker if old Wrangel had not been in command. Wrangel was too aged for any employment. But Bismarck was determined that a Prussian must command. Only Wrangel was senior to the many aged veterans in the Austrian service. Wrangel's claim was unassailable.

Crown Prince Frederick's instructions as Chief of Staff

amounted to a commission to command the Allied army. It is said that some of the orders issued by Wrangel were impossible to carry out. It was Frederick William's role to avert catastrophe with firm tactfulness. If the old man issued an order before retiring to his camp bedstead for the night, it could usually be countermanded with confidence. He would have forgotten about it when roused by his orderly in the morning. But if he gave out an order after breakfast or on the field of battle, the problem became a nightmare for his Chief of Staff. The Commander-in-Chief was obstinate and ferocious. Frederick William saved many lives by his tact and generalship. In so far as credit was due in a campaign in which victory was practically inevitable, that credit went to the Crown Prince. When he was recalled to Prussia at the end of May the great battles of the war had been fought. He held the love and admiration of the army. He had never spared himself on behalf of the troops nor shirked the posts of danger and hardship.

He joined his wife and William at Hamburg and his railway carriage was full of flowers, for his journey from the front had been a triumphal progress.

IX

Bertie and Alix were travelling incognito in Germany that summer. They came upon Vicky and Fritz at Cologne. Bertie was still angry with his eldest sister. She had been much too Prussian in the late war. The encounter may have been a little stiff. Judging by Bertie's letter home he had not much use for Fritz, either. 'It is not pleasant to see him and his A.D.C. always in Prussian uniform, flaunting before our eyes a most objectionable ribbon which he received for his deeds of valour (???) against the unhappy Danes.'

Prince Sigismund was born late in September. He had less than two years to live, but he must have been a child of great personality. Both father and mother worshipped the ground he tottered over during his last few months of life. Perhaps Vicky loved him best of all her children.

Gustav Putlitz, famous Prussian dramatist, saw a great deal of the Crown Princess that summer. He was acting for a spell as her chamberlain, for she liked literary men about her if they were Liberals. Putlitz was filled with wonder and respect. This enthusiast's descriptions to his wife of life at the New Palace almost touches burlesque, but there is no reason to doubt his veracity.

'This youthful princess is more cultivated than any other woman I know of her age,' he told Frau Putlitz. 'It is amazing that she remembers everything she reads and she debates history like a historian. She has absolutely read everything and knows it all more or less by heart.' One morning they walked together through the woods when the trees were wet and fragrant after rain. 'The Crown Princess wanted every variety of wild flower we could find, and she knew the Latin, English, and German names of each kind.'

The Princess liked intimate tea parties, attended by her ladies and the chamberlains. She sat at a spinning-wheel in a plain homespun gown of her own making. As she spun she sang suitable German songs. At the right moments her ladies joined in. When she was tired of singing she called on one of the chamberlains to read aloud the poems of Goethe, Heine, or Geibel. She commonly repeated the words with him as she went on spinning. There was no subject she could not discuss. She preferred the arts and sciences, but she was amazingly knowledgeable on the Army, for she had grown more militaristic since the war. She knew more about Naval matters than most Prussians, for their navy was in a very elementary state in the 'sixties. In fact, it is not impossible that her superior remarks about the British Navy inspired certain friends of her husband who were highly placed in the Prussian Navy to set to work on that ambitious programme of naval reorganization and building in the seventies which ended in the frantic Anglo-Prussian 'ship-building race' just prior to the Great War.

If one of the many pictures fell off the wall, the Princess fetched the steps and nailed it up herself. She could do it

better than anybody else. The household was run with admirable regularity. Servants with the duster had learned never to put anything back an inch out of place in the crowded rooms. This unique Princess, who could even claim to be one of the best sculptors in Germany, never wasted a minute of her day. When she had nothing else to do she walked to the end of her private garden and practised pistol-shooting at a target. She was very expert. Naturally, her garden was a gem of its kind and a model of artistic neatness. She was not afraid of hard work with the spade and, whatever she might be wearing, she liked to carry a pair of gardening scissors in her pocket, for she was constantly snipping and pruning.

The Princess had an amazing repertoire of songs in English, German, French, Spanish, and Italian, and one of her ill-judged actions was to commission a celebrated London music master to come over at intervals to superintend her voice. She could have found an equally competent tutor in Germany and her insistence on the Englishman did not pass unnoticed. Her lack of respect for the conventionalities has already been remarked. Her parents-in-law could not overlook the fact that she had imbued their son with her own disregard of Royal etiquette. She had, for instance, taught Fritz to drive out with two instead of four horses in the carriage, which irritated and humiliated the Hohenzollerns. When Lord Ronald Gower and his mother were coming to stay at the New Palace she and Fritz drove to meet them at the station. Prussian Royalty never drove to fetch commoners from a railway station.

Lord Ronald has left on record his first impressions of the New Palace. 'We dined at 2 p.m. and we had to dress in our evening things for this repast. It took place upstairs in a corner room, with the walls of blue silk, fringed with gold lace. The Princess very smart in a magenta-coloured gown with pearls and lace. The Crown Prince, in his plain uniform, with only a star or two, which he always wears. "It is a custom," he said, "and looks so very officered." Tea was served at ten in the evening in

one of the rooms on the ground floor of the Palace. They call it the Apollo Room, I believe. It was a curious meal, beginning with tea and cake, followed by meat, veal, and jellies, and two plates of sour cream. For this repast one was not expected to don one's evening apparel a second time.'

The children breakfasted with their parents. They dined with them only when there were no visitors. Lord Ronald noticed that the Crown Princess was a strict mother. A familiar sight to members of the Household in those days was a little boy stretched on his stomach on the floor of the Crown Prince's study, poring over a huge book, almost as big as himself. The boy was William. The book was Bock's *German Treasures of the Holy Roman Empire*. He always tugged the same book out of the shelf. He lingered for a quarter of an hour over one illustration. All of them were magnificent. They set him dreaming. The glory of the Holy Roman Empire! If he had been German Emperor in those days all these wonderful things would have been at his command. When he grew up he was only going to be King of Prussia. That was a pity. William was a romantic dreamer like his father. When William dreamed he did not hear what his mother said to him. His mother did not know about dreams. But she did believe he ought to be a great King of Prussia. You could be that better if you did not dream. You had to learn to do things.

The father used to come in and find his son on the floor with the book. He used to lie down beside him. They used to discuss the *Treasures*. William used to surprise 'Dokka' with his knowledge of ancient German history. The Crown Prince used to take his son to the crypt of Berlin Cathedral, where they would gaze at the dim tombs of the old Kings. Sometimes they walked hand in hand through the pine trees at Potsdam to visit the Mausoleum of Frederick the Great.

There were several men, close friends of his father, who were very familiar to William both at the New Palace and the Berlin home. When these men, of very heterogeneous

views, talked to his father, William listened with attention. His brain was keenly receptive. He stored up their words. Altogether, his mind was bound to be a strange jumble. General von Mischke had a heart of gold. He was the Crown Prince's best friend and never forgot to pay his respects to William. When his father had the *Weltschmerz*—the black fit—von Mischke could always get him out of it with a joke. Everybody else had given up trying to do so, except Willy, who sometimes succeeded by asking a question about old German history.

Jasmund was the personal A.D.C. of his father. Jasmund was always talking in a clever way and laughing with his mother. His mother and Jasmund were rather alike. He did not care for Jasmund quite so well. There was von Friedberg, the Jewish lawyer, who was always smiling and gave him presents. Mama and Papa admired him because they said he was clever. But some Prussians did not like Jews. William knew that. There was Major von Winterfeldt, who was not like a real officer, because he was always laughing and had a chubby face, and used to say that people at Grandpa's Court walked about so proudly that they looked 'stuffed with their own mattresses,' and other funny things, which made Mama cry with laughter. Prince Adalbert was an Admiral. He was always listening to Mama talking about the English Navy and asking questions, and saying that Prussia ought to have a navy like that. There was Professor Hans Delbruck, the great historian, who talked about history with Mama and Papa and was very interesting; there was Professor Ernst Curtius, Papa's old tutor, who never saw things and forgot things, who was always talking in a fascinating way about Ancient Greek heroes and Athens and Rome; there was von Winter, the Mayor of Danzig, who waved his arms and dribbled a bit, and hated 'Old Prussians'; and lots of other Liberal men with bushy beards and whiskers and long hair.

Queen Victoria was much aggravated in 1865 when Vicky wrote to say that the King preferred that she and Fritz should not come to England this year. She could not help

exclaiming: "I must say, Prussians are odious people." Perhaps it was partly because of this prohibition that she convinced herself it would be well to visit Coburg that autumn. There were, of course, other reasons. At Gastein Prussia and Austria, as a temporary measure, had agreed to govern jointly in Schleswig-Holstein until the States were fit to govern themselves.

Ever since, Bismarck and the Prussian Press had been finding fault with Austria. If Bismarck went on in that tone there would be a war. "Not a day passes," Vicky had told her, "but the wicked man (Bismarck) does not with the *greatest* ability counteract and thwart what is good, and drive on towards war, turning and twisting everything to serve his own purpose. The tissue of untruths is such that one gets quite perplexed with only listening to them, but the net is cleverly made, and the King, in spite of *all* his reluctance, gets more and more entangled in it without perceiving it."

If Prussia went to war with Austria, Prussia would be beaten. If only Vicky had not been Crown Princess of the odious country she would have said that it served them right. But it would not do for the bright future of Vicky and little William to be blighted by their country's becoming a vassal State, like Hungary. It would not be a happy position for poor Alice, either, for the Hesses would be sure to be involved on one side or the other. And there was another item which was disturbing the Queen. From what she had gathered from Vicky and from roundabout whispers she did not think Vicky was being quite successful with the Prussians. She was unhappy. If she went out to Coburg she would be able to have a private conversation with dear Robert Morier, of whom dearest Albert had thought so much, and he would explain everything. He would also tell her if she could make things better by talking frankly about it with King William or Count Bismarck.

In the autumn Austria was calling a meeting of the German States at Frankfurt, to discuss a total revision of the Confederation. Naturally, that odious Bismarck was

not going to let Prussia attend a meeting presided over by Austria. Obviously, he was jealous. Without Prussia the meeting would be a waste of time and money and everybody would go away more irritable than before. Austria would not forget the Prussian rebuff. The Queen thought that a quiet conversation with William I and another with Francis Joseph might perhaps pour oil on stormy waters and stop a troublesome war. Both at home and in Germany people made shrewd guesses as to why the Queen was going to Coburg. The Prussians were annoyed, but thought it rather funny. The English thought it undignified and wanted to know, in any case, why Her Majesty was going travelling about the Continent incognito as the *Countess of Balmoral* with that scandalous Highlander, John Brown, in tow, when she was perpetually too ill to appear before her own subjects.

Quite a big gathering of German relations, including Vicky, Fritz, and William, awaited the arrival of the Countess of Balmoral at Rosenau, the beautiful birthplace of Prince Albert. The party was not to be without its mournful side, for all Albert's scenes had to be visited in pilgrimage.

John Brown, the tall kilted ghillie who followed Her Majesty everywhere, and treated her like a servant girl, was the cause of a fantastic story which went about Germany and which did no good to the cause of the Crown Prince and Princess, and did nothing to bring warmer sentiments in the heart of Prussia for Queen Victoria. It so happened that a picture had circulated in Germany showing the Crown Prince Frederick William in Highland costume when at Balmoral. That Queen Victoria was a dictatorial parent and mother-in-law was a commonplace joke. The amazing tale reached Prussia via the country people round Rosenau that the Crown Prince had donned Highland costume to please his mother-in-law, and that he had not merely been seen to dance attendance on her like a footman—holding open her carriage door and adjusting the step—but that he had actually been seen standing 'up behind' on the Queen of England's carriage when she went driving.

The explanation was simple. Frederick William and John Brown were both burly giants, with hairy faces. People who only knew the likeness of Frederick William from crude pictures—some in Highland costume—might pardonably mistake one for the other ; especially as Brown, when sober, comported himself with the air of a lord.

The Queen had her talk with Robert Morier, who urged her most strongly to give over any idea of seeking to discuss the affairs of Vicky with King William or Count Bismarck. She agreed to follow his advice. King William did come to see the Queen. He had a private talk with her. As, however, he had been carefully primed by Bismarck with the notion that Her Majesty was seeking to get a stronger hold on Prussian affairs, he was wary. Francis Joseph, also, defined the Imperial etiquette to come to Coburg for the privilege of a discussion with the already-fabulous English Queen. Both sovereigns were extremely polite and restrained and understanding in the presence, giving quite satisfactory grounds for hope ; and they duly went to war with one another in the following year. One entirely pleasing matter, at least, the Queen knew she had settled before she sadly left Coburg for home. She had asked King William why Vicky and Fritz could not come to England this year. He said there was no objection at all—this year, or at any time ; a statement which would not be forgotten in the future.

An incident which took place about this time, and may have happened during the family gathering at Rosenau, illustrates not only the Crown Princess's recklessness of manner at times when her emotions were stirred, but also something of the peremptoriness of her way with the concerns of William. This kind of occurrence humiliated the proud and sensitive little boy. When his mother grew intensely English he was puzzled and set wondering. In his position, often visiting the palaces of his Prussian grandparents and drinking in conversations entirely opposite to those overheard in his mother's own circle, he was making the surprising discovery that his family did not think alike.

One of the great shooting parties was to take place,

attended by the local barons and a number of Hohenzollerns and high aristocrats. Ladies attended these performances in their most fashionable costumes. The Crown Prince, who had no liking for killing birds and animals, rarely came to shoots, and his wife had never previously done so. She thought it would be a treat for William, and they took their son and 'Dokka' with them in the carriage. They drove through the forest to the appointed place. In a wide glade rows of arm-chairs had been drawn up, which were rapidly filling with distinguished ladies and gentlemen. The gentlemen, in feathered hats, high boots—often silver-spurred—and corded jackets sat themselves in the front arm-chairs. Laying their guns across their knees and lighting cigars, they entered into placid conversation.

Thus everybody sat for some time as if waiting for the curtain to go up on a play. Occasionally a liveried keeper came out from among the trees and saluted the company. The sportsmen smoked contentedly. A hunting horn sounded in the forest, and others took up the plaintive call. A sound of distant beaters approaching grew louder. Birds and beasts began to flash across the glade, at first in ones and twos, then in numbers. Evidently the forest harboured huge quantities of game.

Cigar in mouth and still seated, the princely sportsmen opened fire energetically on the thickly massed creatures rushing close before the chairs. A cold-blooded massacre, not a shoot, was getting under way.

Sick and horrified, tense with indignation, the Crown Princess turned to 'Dokka.'

"Dokka," she said, "take William away into the woods at once. Don't bring him back until this disgraceful performance is ended. I should like my son to have his first experience of a shoot in *England*. He will learn something about sportsmanship there which I hope will stick with him for the rest of his life. No wonder Prussians grow up so heartless!"

It was thought that the Princess was about to leave the scene herself, but she did not do so. The result of her speech, uttered in clear, contemptuous tones, was to cause genuine

dismay to everybody. The proud sportsmen were hurt, humiliated, astounded, especially as the words had come from a beautiful woman. Vicky may have been right in her resentment, but this was a time-honoured custom, and to find fault with it so vehemently was pointless, rude, and even a kind of cruelty in its turn.

1866 was a year of events for Prussia, for the Crown Prince and Princess and for William. The Crown Princess was expecting another child. She left Berlin by train for Potsdam on the morning of April 12th. Her pregnancy had been easy. She expected to be confined at the New Palace in perhaps a week. The nurses were to arrive at the New Palace in a few days. A choice selection of baby clothes was to be sent from Berlin, with all other necessities.

The pains took her soon after the train started. Half-way, she knew beyond a doubt that she was advancing in labour. The lady-in-waiting believed she could not reach Potsdam, let alone the Palace, before the child was born. The train could not be speeded up, for another train was ahead. No doctor was available.

She did reach Potsdam, in a state of collapse. They carried her to the waiting carriage, which started off at as strong a pace as the coachman dared for the New Palace. The child just missed seeing its first sight of the world in the entrance hall of the New Palace. It was born in a side-room—a lively and healthy girl who was to become Princess Victoria, a favourite sister of her brother William. Nothing, of course, was ready and nobody who attended the Princess had been present at a birth before. Throughout, she gave instructions with tremendous courage and presence of mind. There being no baby clothes, she ordered that her daughter should be wrapped in one of her satin petticoats. The twenty-one-gun salute which suddenly crashed over Berlin caused amazement to everyone from King William and his son downwards, for so important was this Royal saluting ceremony considered that news of the birth reached the artillery barracks before it came to the father.

X

'Suspended midway between peace and war,' was how Vicky described to her mother the state of affairs in Prussia and Austria in May. Prussia had taken her precautions, as was to be expected, since Bismarck intended the war to take place and was confident of victory. The Prussian Army was mobilized and divided into three Corps, the command of the Second going to the Crown Prince. Although shut off from affairs of State, he guessed why the struggle had to take place. The thought filled his heart with horror and misery. In private conversations with his father he had attempted to persuade the old man to resist his Chancellor. The only result was to leave the King dumb and glowering over his own weakness of will. Vicky's letters to her mother cried out with dismay and dread. The Queen, having decided that Francis Joseph must win, did all she could through the Berlin and Vienna chancelleries to stop the outbreak. She even sent a pseudo-confidential letter to Frederick William frankly expressing her views on the subject and suggesting remedies, which she advised him to show to his father as if in confidence. He did so, and King William frowningly pocketed the letter, saying that he must write and explain things to the Queen. He never did so.

June came, with a burst of glorious sunshine after a leaden May. The birds sang as Frederick William hurried away from the christening of Princess Victoria at Potsdam to join the Silesians at Breslau. His heart bled. Not only had he left home and wife and children—perhaps for ever—but little Sigismund, the joy and pride of his life, was desperately ill. 'I think my heart will break,' Vicky wrote to Osborne.

Much worse for her was to follow. Sigismund's ailment was pronounced to be meningitis. Every one of the doctors attending him came to tell the Crown Princess that they were summoned to the front. On June 19th a telegram was handed to Frederick William after he had addressed his troops at Niesse. Sigismund was dead. He, at least, could

choke his pain in activities which hardly allowed him time to seek his bed.

Vicky's unbounded grief is forcibly demonstrated by her friend, Lady Macdonell. They were walking down a corridor at New Palace. The Crown Princess was silent. Her friend knew that she was gnawing out her heart. Swiftly, the Princess turned aside and unlocked a door. Biting her lip, she beckoned her companion to enter. It is strange and infinitely pathetic that the fascination of brutal emotional self-torture manifests itself in several members of the House of Windsor. She saw a cot and a child sleeping in the cot. She almost recoiled. It was Sigismund.

She came closer. The head on the pillow was wax, in the likeness of Sigismund. On the carpet lay Sigismund's silver rattle and ball. In life he was always flinging them out of his cot. Sigismund's slippers waited at the foot of the cot. Arranged about it, as his mother had arranged them every night, were his favourite toys.

The Northern States of Germany elected to march with Prussia; the Southern States, judging Francis Joseph to have the better cause and the hope of victory, declared for Austria. Seven fearful weeks brought Austria to her knees. Nachod! Skalicz! Schweinschadel! Thrusting relentlessly through the wooded Bohemian foothills, flooding down the hot, green valley of the Elbe, the men of iron descended upon the bridgehead of Sadowa. New Prussian needle-guns poured death into the reeling columns of Austria, outshot and outfought, with their clumsy muskets and peace-loving souls. They were slaughtered in thousands in the cool dimness of Maslowed Wood, where the birds were singing, and along the banks of the shining Bistritz. Split, scattered, recoiling through the smoke-haze in all directions, they left forty thousand dead in the sultry twilight.

'He who causes war with a stroke of the pen knows not what he is calling up from Hades.' Frederick William, whose brilliant initiative won the battle, wrote those words after riding with King William and Bismarck across the blood-soaked acres round Sadowa, where the wounded stirred

sluggishly in the red slime and dead Austrians glared reproachfully at the victorious horsemen.

Frederick William spoke only the truth when he complained to Vicky of the tragic irony that he, of all men, should be forced to win his spurs in the science of human butchery. It was doubly ironic that in so doing he knew he was serving the ambitions of Bismarck—the rival dreamer, the man who meant to build a Germanic State of blood and iron.

An Englishman with the Prussians closely watched Count Bismarck, through the forty-nine days of triumph and fear that ended at Sadowa. No contemporary has left a more telling picture of the Prussian, whose suspicious hatred of the *Englanderin* led to such calamitous consequences.

'Bismarck believes in himself and fully so,' notes the Englishman. 'He believes he was called on to do a certain work, and that he is quite capable to accomplish it. His power of endurance is very great. He often sits up night after night working hard. During this campaign he has never slept more than three hours out of the twenty-four; this is less than the great Napoleon. But constantly continued work has had an effect upon him; his face is seamed all over, he has dark lines under his eyes, and the eyes themselves are bloodshot. He looks like a man who is knocked up by overwork, and yet he is gay and jovial, pleasant and cheery. What surprised me most was his thorough openness in conversation. Without the least reserve he spoke of his intentions, of the future of Prussia and of Germany. For an hour and a half he thus went on. His resolve is indomitable, and he feels certain of going through with the work before him. The King is, of course, a mere tool in his hands; but it shows his great skill and dexterity in turning such an instrument to his purpose. I do not think him Liberal in the sense that you or I are Liberal. There is no doubt but that what he thinks best he will enforce, and that what he does is, he believes, for the good and glory of Prussia.'

At home the Crown Princess put aside her own tragedy.

She and the family left for Heringsdorf, where she set to work to organize the hospitals. She met with little thanks. The wounded seemed to expect dirt and evil smells. A vase of flowers filled them with astonishment.

Once again Vicky's mother was startled at the tone of her daughter's letters once the war had started. Vicky's horror and detestation of aggressive Prussianism had vanished. 'I am now every bit as proud of being a Prussian as I am of being an Englishwoman, and you know what a "John Bull" I am,' read the Queen. News of Prussian victory was carrying her away. 'I must say the Prussians are a superior race, as regards intelligence and humanity, education, and kindheartedness,' she exclaims. But her feelings toward Bismarck have not softened.

'With such a man and such principles at the head of our Government how can I look forward to satisfactory results for Germany, or for us!' And, again, after this war, as after the Danish campaign, she finds it necessary to say to her mother, 'I know it is very difficult to make you, or any other non-German, see how our case lies.'

The Austrian War was over, but Hesse, Hanover, Saxony, Frankfort, all those which had declared for Austria, had still to be punished. It was not long before the Prussian columns were pouring into Darmstadt, the Hessian capital, with bands playing and colours flying. It was a moment of fearful anxiety for Vicky. Her sister Alice remained staunchly in Darmstadt, while the Prussian soldiery pillaged the capital at will. Her husband was kept in the field with the beaten Hessian troops. Yet, on the whole, the Prussians treated Hesse with moderation. They crippled her revenue for ever, they impoverished her Ducal family, they sawed away her richest territories, but they left her free; whereas Hanover and Saxony swelled the kingdom of Prussia with their entire territory.

Austria was at Prussia's mercy. King William saw he could demand what terms he wished. There were moments when the old warrior pictured himself riding triumphantly at the head of his troops through Vienna. Proud Francis

Joseph might pay him homage. Austria must atone bitterly for the Prussian blood she had spilt. Her coffers must be emptied. She should never rise out of her humiliation.

Bismarck was looking ahead. He had to deal with France next. He did not relish a revengeful Austria, ready to stab Prussia in the back, when the Prussian Army was marching on Paris. The Austrian War had achieved its object—the elimination of Austria from rivalry with Prussia in the German Confederation. Moreover, the war had given him the excuse to destroy or make impotent those German States inimical to the advance of Prussia. Let Austria escape lightly from the war. Let her be shut off for ever from the German Confederation, but at the same time let her be encouraged to become the friend of Prussia.

Never was Bismarck faced by his sovereign with such a wall of obstinacy as over the Austrian terms. At the vital Council of War, Bismarck was almost lost for the first time in his Chancellorship. The scene was dramatic. The King, backed by his generals, dared to defy the mesmeric power of the man who ruled him. The Chancellor smouldered at his dull-witted master, swallowing the insolent words that jumped in his throat. Unexpectedly, King William grew softer in his manner. He turned to the Crown Prince.

"Perhaps it is for you to decide," he said. "You speak for the Future."

"I think the Chancellor is right," answered the Crown Prince.

The matter was decided. Frederick William, by advocating that humane course that naturally appealed to him, had played the Chancellor's game to the detriment of his own scheme of peaceful German unity. A clear road lay ahead of the Chancellor, while, had he been left with reasons to fear Austria, he might never have dared to try his bold scheme against France; the achievement of which placed him so firmly in the saddle that the Liberal hopes of the Crown Prince and Princess were finally condemned to oblivion.

At the end of July Frederick William was on his way from the battlefield. The Crown Princess and her children drove

out along the road from Heringsdorf in the summer evening. They entered a wood and, riding toward them, were the Crown Prince and his staff. His whiskers had grown to a rich beard. It ennobled him. His face was drawn. Now that the anxieties of active service were over he was remembering Sigismund. Too moved to speak, husband and wife clung to one another. William had been made to learn by heart a poem composed by his mother on the death of Sigismund. He eyed the group of officers resentfully as he awaited a favourable moment to begin his recitation. The poem ended, the Crown Prince mounted into the carriage after the family and they returned for the night to Heringsdorf. A few days later, at Ermansdorf, the Crown Princess, holding the hand of William, came forward to crown with a laurel wreath the colours of the Fusilier battalion of the Royal Grenadiers, on their return from the war.

At about this time Bismarck recalls a conversation with the Crown Princess which both puzzled him and left him with a distinctly unfavourable impression. It was at a large dinner party in Berlin. Bismarck found himself next to the Crown Princess. Certainly, she was not a dull conversationalist, but she was an unrestful one. The Count had been honoured by her intimate society at these functions before. He sometimes suspected that she arranged with the hostess to sit beside him. When were her words to be taken seriously, and was she trying to mock at him? She generally led the conversation round to politics. Hints about the superiority of representative governmental machinery always slipped in somewhere. He knew too much about Westminster already.

"You would like to be a king, or at least, a president of a republic." The *Engländerin* smiled at him almost roguishly as she spoke.

Bismarck was startled. Nothing was further from his thoughts. He paused. He smiled. He must receive this in the same vein as it had been given. His words would probably go to Osborne, so he must weigh them.

"Personally, I am spoilt for a Republican, ma'am," he murmured. "I have grown up in the Royalist traditions

of my family and I need a monarchical institution for my worldly well-being. I thank God that I was not destined to be a King—always on show—but rather the King's faithful subject until death." The smile vanished from the wrinkled face. The pale bloodshot eyes were cunning. He had seen a chance to point a telling moral, which might go home. "However, ma'am," he went on, "I can give no guarantee that this conviction of mine will continue indefinitely; and that will not be because my Royalist convictions give out, but because Kings may! Since I express myself so far, I cannot truly say that I am unanxious at the idea of a change in the occupancy of the throne if the present monarchical traditions do not go with it to the successor."

Did the Crown Princess understand him? He did not know. 'The Princess avoided every serious turn and kept up the jocular tone, as amiable and entertaining as ever,' he complains. 'She rather gave me the impression that she wished to tease a political opponent. . . . I frequently remarked in the course of similar conversations that the Princess took pleasure in provoking my patriotic susceptibilities by playful criticism of persons and matters.'

XI

1866 was an eventful year for William, for Hintzpeter, the tutor, arrived at New Palace. Thin, sallow, close-lipped, masterful, with a streak of 'Old Prussian' sadism. A fine tutor and a worthy German, but not a good master for a cripple boy who must one day rule a kingdom.

Let it be remembered that Hintzpeter in his tutorship was hand in glove with the Crown Princess. He sought her approval. The Crown Prince had met him at the house of Count Emile Gortz, whose sons he had tutored with great success, and it was the Crown Prince who decided to engage him to tutor Prince William and Prince Henry. But it was with the Crown Princess that Hintzpeter always conferred, and William was usually the subject of their discussion, for Henry was not much of a problem.

Hinzpeter was thirty-nine, the son of a high school professor of Bieflod. 'He was distinguished in bearing and very ambitious,' his old pupil, William II, has said of him. Let us hear William's estimate of the tutor as he assessed it many years later, when an exile in Holland. 'His (Hinzpeter's) educational system was based exclusively on a stern sense of duty and the idea of service; the character was to be fortified by perpetual "renunciation," the life of the Prince to be moulded on the lines of old Prussian simplicity—the ideal being the harsh discipline of the Spartans. "Renunciation" was the word; dry bread for breakfast. No praise, for the categorical imperative of duty demanded its due; there was no room for the encouraging or improving word. I remember an occasion when I went from Cassel to Berlin for my grandfather's birthday, and left before the evening party in my zeal. After travelling all night, I reported to Hinzpeter, who was still in bed. No word of commendation; only the instruction to prepare for the first lesson. This refusal of praise was part of a system with a perfectly definite object. The impossible was expected of the pupil in order to force him to the nearest degree of perfection. Naturally, the impossible goal could never be achieved; logically, therefore, approval was excluded.'

William compares Hinzpeter to a famous Berlin trainer of cavalry chargers, Rosenberg of the Hussars, who drove his raw horses at impossible jumps. With many animals this was a great success, but, although William does not mention this fact, there must have been others which were rendered nervous and unmanageable for life.

Hinzpeter's theories of 'renunciation' extended to the tea parties which William and Henry gave to their friends in the schoolroom. When the fit was on Hinzpeter he would tell the two Princes to hand round the plates of iced cakes to the guests, but to eat none themselves. He always took money away from his pupils if they were given any and to get back a small portion of it was a nerve-shattering ordeal. Hinzpeter never gave a lesson to his cowed pupils; he *dictated* it. He entirely dominated his charges. He deferred

to nobody but their mother, of whom he spoke with keen admiration.

'Joyless as the personality of this dry, pedantic man, grown up in the shadows of Calvinism, was his educational system; joyless the youth through which I was guided,' writes his eldest pupil.

That theory by which the tutor withheld all praise from the pupils, and in which their mother concurred, is a subject of extreme importance when contemplating the sad career of William as Emperor of Germany. His sensitive, nervous disposition craved for violent appreciation. He was starved of this throughout the whole of his youth, both by his mother and his tutor—the two persons with whom he came most intimately in contact day by day. Hence his well-nigh mad antics when he became an Emperor. He must for ever be causing wonder, amazement, apprehension. The sentiments he longed to stir up were forthcoming in ample measure. He started by playing in grand drama to his Court, his Ministers, his people. Scores of self-seeking flatterers greeted him with applause. He ended by strutting and bellowing before a quaking world and collapsed in tearful despair when it was too late.

William was making no progress in riding and the problem worried his mother. His affliction made him top-heavy. If his pony grew slightly restive, he slid off its left side, landing on his back. Hinzpeter remedied his pupil's fear of horseback. The drastic system now brought into full play was not, however, entirely of his invention.

Von Putlitz, when acting as chamberlain to the Crown Princess before the coming of Hinzpeter, registers his surprise at an incident he witnessed outside New Palace one summer morning. Putlitz was talking to the Crown Princess and she was very gay. William was mounted on his pony. A gust of wind blew off the boy's hat. The pony bucked. In a moment William was stretched on his back on the gravel. He lay there shaken and tearful. His mother took no notice, but went on laughing and talking. William was helped to remount, and it was pretty clear to Putlitz that the mother

did not approve of such weak horsemanship, and that, had William declined to remount, parental pressure would have come into play.

Therefore, when Hinzpeter started to accompany William's horseback exercise he was only perfecting a grim system of equitation training which was already accepted in the Household in theory. He must not, then, be held solely responsible for the dire psychological effect which his successful method probably had upon every angle of William's nature in after-life. In fairness, the difficulties of the situation must be appreciated. Here was a boy to whom the art of horsemanship would be essential when he grew up ; that is to say, if he were to attempt to fulfil the normal functions of a Prussian Prince. This boy had grown so horse-shy by the time he was entrusted to Hinzpeter that he was rebellious unless his pony's head was held by a groom.

Even so, was it well considered to force this obstinate and neurotic cripple child to master his horse by treatment which the victim himself is perfectly justified in recalling as 'atrocious hours' in the saddle? To get an absolutely clear picture of the extent of the disability of the child, who had to submit to Hinzpeter's cruelties, it is best to quote the words of his mother in her letters to Queen Victoria. 'The poor arm is no better—he cannot run fast, because he has no balance, nor ride, nor climb, nor cut his food. It is a hard trial for him and for us. Nothing is neglected that can be done for it . . . that wretched, unhappy arm spoils his face (for it is on one side), his carriage, walk, and figure, makes him awkward in all his movements and gives him a feeling of shyness, as he feels his complete dependence, not being able to do a thing for himself. It is a great difficulty in his education. To me it remains an inexpressible source of sorrow.'

Now let us see the way in which Hinzpeter, with the approval of the Crown Princess, dealt with the riding problem. Hinzpeter shall himself describe it, for he recorded his Royal memories.

'Riding, at first dangerous and forced upon him with stern discipline, despite his tearful resistance, was finally mastered and practised with delight and skill. The process, which it cost unspeakable self-control to watch, illustrates the method, and it may be worth setting out in detail. When the Prince was eight and a half years old, a lacquey still had to lead his pony by the rein, because his balance was so bad that his unsteadiness caused intolerable anxiety to himself and others. So long as this lasted, he could not learn to ride ; it had to be overcome no matter at what cost. Neither groom nor riding-master could do it. Therefore, the tutor, using a moral authority over his pupil that had become absolute, set the weeping Prince on his horse, without stirrups, and compelled him to go through the various paces. He fell off continually ; every time, despite his prayers and tears, he was lifted up and set upon its back again. After weeks of torture the difficult task was accomplished ; he had got his balance. These morning exercises in the alleys of the Park were a nightmare to everyone ; worse for the torturer than the tortured. Such an unusual, if natural, weakness could only be overcome by unusual energy and ruthlessness.'

"My brother Henry often howled with pain when compelled to witness the martyrdom of my youth," says William II, when recalling those horrific riding lessons in the Park at Potsdam.

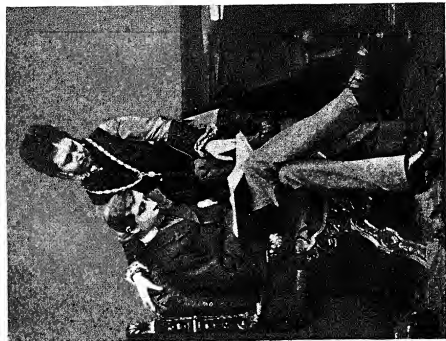
Under Hinzpeter the day's work started for William and Henry at 6 a.m. and finished at about 7 p.m. Nothing must be allowed to disturb the rigid plan, since 'habit of duty' was Hinzpeter's fanatical creed. He talked of this to the Crown Princess as his 'great plan.' The boys dined with their parents in the middle of the day, when there were no visitors, and there was an afternoon break for exercise ; but this period was not pleasurable to William, even after he had mastered the art of horsemanship, for whether the relentless tutor chose that his pupils should walk out or ride out in their period of relaxation, he filled the time with schoolroom

problems, dry disputations, and dreadful cross-questionings. Not a moment must go to waste. The whole of creation rose up to offer itself as a moral.

Every Wednesday and Saturday afternoon Hinzpeter took William and Henry to look over a Berlin workshop or foundry. Before leaving, he always made the princes go up to the overseer with their hats in their hands to thank him for allowing them to go over the works. This was good; and William II has recalled that it was the only side of Hinzpeter's educational programme which appealed to them. Undoubtedly, this did give the future Emperor a certain sympathy with the neglected German working classes inside his mind, but unhappily when it came to moments of test, too often the mingled complexes with which he became inflicted flamed into a super-arrogance which choked his better social feelings.

The boys did not much care for winter life in their Berlin home, for there Hinzpeter was even more in the ascendant than at New Palace. William speaks with pleasure of getting back to his small 'simple attic with its round window' at New Palace, where he looked out upon the changing foliage of spring, summer, and autumn in the beautiful Royal pleasure. On Sundays at Potsdam the whole Royal Family drove into Berlin to the Garrisonkirche. After the service they walked to the Royal Palace, while the troops formed up in long lines beneath pale green avenues of the lindens—the dark, *pickelhaubed* infantry on the south side, the resplendent cavalry dismounted on the north side. A special window of the Palace was allotted to the Royal ladies and another to the Royal children, and William's head swam with triumphant ecstasy, watching his grandfather and his father walking slowly down the glittering parade, as he remembered that one day when he was free from the trammels of parents and tutors it would be his lot so to pace magnificently before his worshipping soldiers.

Not the least unfortunate side of William's weekly round was the conflict he experienced in the minds of his elders. He and his parents went to dine at five o'clock with his



THE CROWN PRINCESS AND PRINCE WILLIAM IN 1876



EMPEROR WILLIAM II IN THE NINETIES

grandfather and grandmother, and on alternate Sundays the latter came to the Crown Prince's home. On such occasions, at the mention of Count Bismarck, especially if members of the Court were present, he heard on all sides expressions of awe, veneration, and enthusiasm for the Chancellor. Even his mother and father joined in this pæan of praise—a trifle half-heartedly. On the other hand, when the King and Queen were not with them mention of the word 'Bismarck' brought an instant unhappy silence. His mother began to talk about something else. William knew perfectly well that his mother disliked this strange, almost mythical warrior-giant, who occasionally moved before his dazzled eyes. He read in the Prussian history books with Hinzpeter about the heroic achievements of Count Bismarck, yet he came to the conclusion that his tutor disapproved of this hero just as did his mother. Hinzpeter told him he was a Liberal constitutionalist, which was apparently the answer to the problem.

Hinzpeter approved of 'Old Prussian' moral codes, but he did not care for 'Old Prussian' militarism. He was decidedly rude to Captain von Schrotter, Guards Artillery, who visited the Crown Prince's homes as Prince William's military governor, and even that harmless ramrod, Sergeant Klee, who reported to teach Prince William the drum, was given a chilly and contemptuous reception. The star of von Schrotter and Klee waned sadly after Hinzpeter came upon the scenes, and William, knowing that when he reached his tenth birthday he would have to carry out his first military duties as a Hohenzollern heir, resented this interference. He did not think it worth while to complain to his mother, who always arranged everything with Hinzpeter, because now that the war was over she sometimes said things which sounded as if she did not like officers. The more William heard against people the more his interest was aroused in them. He began to ask himself *Why*?

William and Henry spent their first four years under Hinzpeter with Latin, arithmetic, history, and geography. Mlle Darcourt, who subsequently married Hinzpeter, taught

the boys French. It was the belief in the household that Hinzpeter was violent in the schoolroom with his two pupils, and that when the Princes were dense he rose up and drove the lesson home with something more potent than hard words. William's sister, Princess Victoria, when recalling her childhood memories, had something to say about this. 'There were times when I would hear Hinzpeter shouting at the top of his voice and using what I took to be a cane. He was in the next room to us with William. The noise of the cane distressed me greatly. I was certain it was being used on William and I taxed Mlle Darcourt about it, but she refused to say a word against her fiancé.'

It is not difficult to see how the Crown Princess, who frequently visited the schoolroom, was credited by scandal-mongers as approving or even attending the chastisement. Another titbit retailed by the scandal-mongers was so amazing that many refused to believe it. This was that the Crown Princess was personally teaching chemistry to Prince William! It was true. Vicky, under her father's auspices, had taken a number of lessons from the great Faraday himself.

It is a rule that two obstinate and similar natures clash and William and his mother were no exception to the rule. In early boyhood William was at a disadvantage and always lost the verbal bout. Repartee between mother and son seems to have run rather to a formula and was frequently overheard by members of the Household, who retailed the stories to an ever-widening circle. One day William, after returning from the King's Palace, uttered some remark which was markedly 'Old Prussian.'

"I wish you would not talk like that, Willy," exclaimed the Crown Princess.

"I talk like that because I am a good Prussian," came the sharp reply. "You are always wanting me to be a good Englishman. I want to be a good Prussian."

"You will never be a good Prussian, Willy, until you have learned to behave like a good Englishman."

Through the open doorway of the schoolroom a passer-by

saw William facing his mother in an obviously defiant attitude on another occasion. Perhaps William had told a lie, as hard-pressed children of his disposition are prone to do, and was protesting his honourable innocence to the incredulous parent. At all events, he had behaved in a manner unworthy of a boy with English blood in his veins.

"Willy, if you are intending to grow up as a gentleman," the Princess was heard to say, "I think the result will be better if you follow the English rather than the Prussian model."

The two might bicker, but at the same time, before others had to observe the strictest decorum. When William first saw her in the morning he had to kiss her hand, and the same ceremony had to be gone through at night. Moreover, he had at all times to remain on his feet in her presence.

A mischievous streak in William sometimes came into play, and it was noticed that this was especially liable to flash out after his equilibrium had been disturbed by some violent passage with his mother. The victim of his bitterness was never the person who had stirred it up.

Empress Augusta and her sister, Princess Charles, were staying at New Palace on a day when William and his mother fell out. That night a big dinner party was taking place and it was a habit of these two elderly ladies, who were very much alike, to wear wigs. The Empress wore a dark wig and her sister a fair wig. Each of them was somewhat shortsighted, and, in any case, the bedrooms at New Palace were poorly illuminated. When the Empress and Princess Charles entered before the assembled company everybody was amazed to see that the Royal ladies had changed wigs.

When it dawned on the guests that a daring practical joker had been at work, they became hysterical. If the Royal sisters discovered what was amiss by a glimpse in one of the mirrors in the brightly lighted *salon* they did not betray the fact. Someone had slipped into the bedrooms while the Empress and Princess Charles were taking their baths and changed the wigs on the stands.

The perpetrator of this outrage was never exposed, as the Royal ladies made no complaint, and it was thought wisest to let sleeping dogs lie ; but in view of the incident which took place on the following morning, doubt hardly existed as to his identity.

Charles was rather a favourite with the boys and it was their privilege to visit the old lady while she was taking her breakfast in bed. William had previously noticed during these visits that the dresser placed the Princess's more intimate garments neatly folded on a chair beside her bed. On top lay her stays. On the morning after the dinner party William was armed with a length of thread when he visited his great-aunt. While Henry kept the Princess occupied, William tied one end of his thread to the laces of her stays. He dropped the other end of the thread out of the open window. It was long enough to reach the ground.

Princess Charles was well known as being a creature of habit, so that, with the aid of a watch, it was possible to gauge almost the exact moment when the Princess would climb out of bed and reach for her stays. The boys waited expectantly below the window, William, with the thread in his hand, Henry with his eye on the watch-face. The moment arrived. William jerked the cord. The pink satin stays came flying out through the window. It was a stroke of bad luck that the final act was witnessed by the Crown Princess and Hinzpeter, who were talking in the garden.

Princess Charles used to live across the Park at Schloss Glienecke and the boys and their sisters used to delight in visiting her. Everything, including the furniture and the lacqueys, was so extremely 'Old Prussian.' The old lady held a kind of court there—an eighteenth-century court. Every visitor upon arrival was given a chair in the ante-room, where servants brought round delicious steaming chocolate in delicate old-fashioned cups. The children had to enter and leave the presence slowly and with dignity. Old Uncle Charles added to the fun because Aunt Charles was always getting angry with him, especially when he was mischievous with the pretty ladies-in-waiting. Then there

was Dowager Queen Elizabeth. She was kind, but entering and leaving her presence with dignity was not a joke. She lived in retirement at the Summer Palace at Sans Souci, where all the surroundings were reminiscent of Frederick the Great. Here the great attraction for William was to be allowed to play with the Queen's big wooden model of Jerusalem. His first request after kissing his great-grandmother's hand was to be allowed to visit 'Heavenly Jerusalem,' as the model was known in the family, and he used to spend hours pulling out and replacing the towers, domes, and minarets which fitted on pegs. When they visited Queen Elizabeth at Easter-time she would send them out to search in the garden for the coloured eggs which she had hidden under the bushes, after the old German custom.

Crown Prince Frederick made up for the lack of his sons' company during work periods by spending a great deal of time with them on holidays. They worked with him in the garden, for he was as keen on gardening as his wife, and he, too, always carried a pair of gardening scissors about with him. He rode with them almost every day. They attended the garrison parades with him and the girls were allowed to come, too. Each morning in summer he bathed with them among the willows at the private bathing place at Gaisberg, and sometimes he took them to bathe with the troops at the garrison baths. He taught them to row on the Jungferensee. He went for long walks with them in the country round Haverstadt, where the scenery was finest, and they diligently studied together the castles and ruins which dotted the landscape.

Sometimes their mother came with them on the walks, but she was always very busy. Quite often she arranged family picnics on lonely Pfaueninsel Isle, which was Crown Prince Frederick's favourite spot. It was the Crown Princess's idea that at some time during each summer William and Henry should go for a walking tour with Hinzpeter. Those parched, hungry marches in the gloom of the Black Forest, or trudging like disputing mediæval scholars along the highways from one time-worn town gate to

another, those frugal nights at mean hostelries, were part of the Spartan educational system which stayed as a nightmarish memory with the boys for life. Hinzpeter usually went home for part of the holidays and William found his mother more restful when the tutor was absent. At home the Princess used to encourage them to get up little dramatic performances, especially on family birthdays and such like occasions, just as Prince Albert had done, and as a rule their grandparents came to see these.

On the morning of January 27th, 1869, William took part in his first ceremony. It was his tenth birthday. According to Hohenzollern tradition, his military life had begun. Many members of the family were gathered in the drawing-room at the Crown Prince's Berlin Palace. King William and Queen Augusta arrived from the Royal Palace across the square. Perhaps William, with his pale girlish face, his small, fragile figure, and his lifeless arm, looked a pathetic recruit to his mother as he stepped forward to receive the exalted Order of the Black Eagle from his grandfather.

Crown Prince Frederick stood beside the King holding the Order on a golden plate. King William invested his grandson with the Order. From a table he took a folded blue uniform faced with gold and scarlet, a miniature sword, and a little *Pickelhaube* surmounted by a crest of drooping white horse-hair. He placed the pile in William's arms. He was lieutenant in the First infantry regiment of the Guard. "You are too young, boy," said the old soldier, "to fully understand the importance of your being a Prussian officer. A time of comprehension will come and you will discharge your duty as your father does."

The first part of the ceremony was over. William hurried to his bedroom to dress himself in his regimentals. The carriages were drawing up at the door. With his father and mother and interested members of the family he drove at the head of a small procession to the barracks of the First Guards. The bodyguard were drilling on the square. He was set at the end of the front rank of tall guardsmen. The drill recommenced. As the long-legged company wheeled and

counter-marched he trotted desperately beside them. Being top-heavy from his arm, he almost toppled over when they broke into the goose-step. The tears came into his eyes, and he was glad when the parade was dismissed.

After that, William was often taken to drill with the Guards. There were times when there was nothing for it but to run after his comrades-in-arms. Only by the fiercest determination did he stop himself from weeping openly on parade. A month or two later, on the anniversary of Gross Gorschen, William, wearing the tall, tufted cap and white trousers of the Prussian Grenadiers, attended the great church parade and afterwards took his place in the line of officers before the ranks in hollow square, while King William and his son passed along the lines to the sound of martial music. Finally, half-running at the rear of his battalion, he scurried past the saluting base.

In July the Crown Prince and Princess and the family, with Count Harrach the painter, stayed at the seaside resort of Nordenburg. While there, they went by paddle steamer through a choppy sea to the newly opened naval harbour of Wilhelmshaven. *König Wilhelm*, the largest battleship in the world, the pride of Prussia, swung at anchor in the sunlit roadstead.

William has left his impression of this visit, which although a trivial incident in itself, is interesting not only for the family picture it calls up, but also because William, the only being who ever threw a serious challenge to British naval might, was to set foot aboard a great warship for the first time. Towering above him as they drew close, he saw one of those fabulous vessels in the ownership of which he had heard again and again that Mama's countrymen were richer than all other people on earth. We see from his own words that the effect made upon him was profound and unforgettable. He came aboard already primed with the wonder of naval might ; at the end of the visit he went over the side in a triumphant dream, in which he on the bridge of his plunging flagship saw his signal flags fluttering up the halyards and the answering signals rush to the mastheads

of his giant armada, as it swept across the seas of the world. Boyish satisfaction in the knowledge that the *König Wilhelm*—the Prussian leviathan—excelled the biggest ship in the vaunted fleet of his mother's countrymen is not likely to have been the least of his emotions.

'I gazed speechless at the ship,' he says. 'Shrill whistles resounded on her, and hundreds of sailors swarmed up the sky-high rigging and lay out in the yards. What impressed me most after the massive rigging was the long tier of guns with their heavy polished brass muzzles. Admiral Jachmann gave us tea and all sorts of rich cakes in his fine, large cabin. What a real joy it would be to command such a vessel, was my inward thought. That evening it was late before sleep visited my eyes, for the *König Wilhelm* occurred again and again in my mind's eye.'

It was a habit of the Crown Princess to deplore that her eldest son was dull-witted, quite lacking in imagination and artistic appreciation, impervious to the glories of nature or the joys of travel. Anybody who has read her letters knows this. It is puzzling. Two explanations offer themselves. Either William shut himself off from her so completely that this seemed to her hasty undiscerning mind actually to be the case, or, obsessed with her own pessimistic notions about William, she deliberately refused to allow herself to find the finer traits in his character. Like Hinzpeter, she left him to starve for appreciation. Such a multitude of words have been written about William II that there cannot now exist the smallest doubt that, whatever he may have been, he was neither dull-witted, unimaginative, inartistic, or indifferent to natural beauties, and as to his craving for travelling far and wide he was to become a kind of joke throughout Europe—'the travelling Emperor.' In some respects he was not as gifted or as versatile as his mother—the macabre burlesque of her, perhaps best describes him—and it is a strange sidelight on her mentality that she could not or would not see in William even the elements of herself, while instinctively fighting and despising her own likeness in the person of William. A few words written by

William are enough to kill his mother's contention about his finer senses.

During the winter of 1869 and the following spring the Crown Prince and Princess, with the family and Hinzpeter, lived at the Grande Hotel Méditerranée at Cannes, which was then a comparatively small, unfashionable spot. Here, various members of the Royal Family joined them from time to time, and although routine lessons went on for the boys, these were in the open air, and it was a happy and healthful change of conditions. They were allowed to forget their princely value. On Sundays they came to service in a big room hired by the German colony, and everybody chatted freely at the door. Sometimes their mother took them to attend Mr. Woolfield's English church as well. Mr. Woolfield, known as the patron of Cannes, used to ask them to come and play with the English children at his fine villa.

Even Hinzpeter was human. He allowed them to explore the luscious orange groves and eat as many oranges as they wished, even in the public street. But he did insist on taking them to Toulon to point a useful moral. The great naval dockyard was a place of sinister reputation, for there the terrible ' hulks ' provided villainous free labour for the yards. For the benefit of his charges he talked with glowering, green-capped assassins condemned *pour l'éternité*, and the red-capped felons who hoped to return to pillage their fellow-citizens. He made sure that his pupils understood the harrowing details of the road to ruin, which the gloating ruffians invented for a few francs.

Now, let us hear William record a memory of Cannes, such as only one with a love of beauty and with real artistic sensibility would recall. ' The amazing flora of the Riviera seemed to me like a peep into Paradise. The sight of the cactus, aloes, roses, tuber roses, blooming out of doors the whole winter long, and in the spring anemones in every colour of the rainbow, the cork trees and strawberry trees, the pines and olives, the palms and bananas were marvels that I could not fathom. Above all, the endless horizon of

the deep blue and green seas, glittering in the rays of the southern skies. It was a new deep breath of life which filled my breast.'

XII

During those years just prior to the outbreak of the Franco-Prussian War the Crown Princess was very active. Nothing but praise can be given to her achievement in Prussia, yet little came to her at the time, and the reason for this was her own unfortunate manner. She never considered the human factor. Whatever she did she left behind jealousy, suspicion and antagonism, where she might have left enthusiasm. She could not understand that if you want to replace a worn-out Prussian institution with a good, modern English institution, or even a French or a Scandinavian system, there are actually persons so illogical that they will refuse to see the obvious advantages of the new idea, quite possibly because its introduction would inconvenience the smooth-flowing tenour of their lives. Such individuals, if they came into the open, were lunatics or criminals. They became her deadly enemies. What was worse, whenever she founded an educational establishment on a new system or a gymnastic institution for girls or a scientific school of cookery or a new kind of clinic or an art society, she always contrived to drive home the idea that she got the inspiration from England, when, in fact, she very often did nothing of the kind. Thus her enemies who began with an anti-*Englanderin* complex, ended with an anti-British complex. The rings in the pool widened, and the instinctive Prussian urge to bristle at the word 'England' began to take embryonic form. Ahead, over the horizon, a sad train of events lay in wait which moulded the embryo *hate* to a national Hymn of Hate. As concrete examples of where the Crown Princess went wrong the cases of the Victoria Lyceum—the first big girls' school—and the Victoria Fortbildungsschule—a kind of girls' finishing school and university—are as good as any. In both institutions, contrary to all advice, she

installed English principals, 'just as if we Prussians were a tribe of negroes in need of English missionaries,' as Berliners remarked at the time.

One instance is recorded during these years in which the Crown Princess acted not only with her customary well-meant indiscretion, but in which she deliberately placed her personal feelings before her duty; that crime which seems to be most unpardonable in Royalty. It cannot be denied that her mother set her a sturdy example in this kind of conduct for years; but unhappily, Prussians were less long-suffering than the subjects of Queen Victoria.

Shortly after the Austrian War Bismarck did his best to quarrel with Napoleon III over the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg. The Press and other familiar aids were brought into play. It was a failure. There were too many cool heads in Europe just at that moment to suit the great Chancellor. The only result was a conference in London, followed by the International Exhibition in Paris in 1867, to celebrate the achievement of the amicable settlement of the crisis.

The King and Queen of Prussia, the Crown Prince and Princess, numerous crowned heads, and minor royalties, Bismarck, and even the Shah of Persia arrived in Paris for the grand celebration. The Crown Prince of Prussia had an especially important part to play in the ceremonies because he was President of the German exhibit. Naturally, he needed the assistance of the Crown Princess.

Judge of the astonishment and dismay when the Crown Princess suddenly took the train home in the middle of the visit. She was not ill. A black cloud of depression had descended upon her. The grave of Sigismund was calling her. Not for another moment would she smother her disgust at the inane smiles and the fatuous words of these bowing hypocrites. Little Sigismund was dead. The hollow mockery could not be borne another day. King William begged her to stay till the end. Queen Augusta did the same. They were excessively angry. Fritz protested, but gave way. The French Emperor was insulted. The Parisians were insulted. When news reached Berlin that the Crown

Princess had deserted the Royal party, people were baffled. Her ill-wishers were soon ready to offer comments and explanations suitable to the occasion.

If the Crown Princess were ready to give way to her personal feelings on an important international occasion of this kind, one can hardly believe that many minor instances of her selfishness were not manifested at home in Prussia and, if so, it is even more understandable that her enemies increased about her.

It was not until the morning of July 15th, 1870, that the shadow of the Franco-Prussian War descended with grim terror on the two eldest sons of the Crown Prince of Prussia. The months of fear and suspense had remained outside the door of the schoolroom at New Palace.

Mlle Darcourt was giving them their French lesson. The schoolroom door opened. The Crown Prince entered. He was distraught. His hands were clenched. His voice was calm, but a tremor was in it.

"Ah, Mademoiselle, your countrymen have lost their heads," he exclaimed. "They are going to attack us. It is war!"

He left the schoolroom as if dazed, and the Frenchwoman burst into tears.

Bismarck had triumphed. He had achieved his final masterpiece. He had made Napoleon III declare war. But Crown Prince Frederick did not know that when he wandered distractedly into New Palace schoolroom. The Crown Princess did not know it when she wrote to her mother that terror-stricken people all over Germany were crying out: 'If we are annihilated England will be the cause. She knows that we have been unfairly and unjustly attacked and yet she will see us go to the bottom, without stirring a little finger to help us. . . . England is growing fat—is too lazy to stir herself, and prefers to let us be ruined rather than say a stern word to France.' Robert Morier, that expert on German affairs, was no wiser than the Crown Prince and Princess when he cried out that England sat by 'like a bloated Quaker, too holy to fight (against France), but

rubbing hands at the roaring trade we are doing in cartridges and ammunition (in France).'

This was Germany's war, not Prussia's war. Bismarck had seen to that. Even King William was bewildered. Germany was shaking with fright. The terrible French Army, the finest in the world, sons and grandsons of Buonaparte's *Grande Armée*—the cruellest pillagers of modern history—might burst like a giant wave across the peaceful German lands. They felt as the Crown Princess of Prussia felt. 'All hope is at an end. We have the most terrible war Europe has yet known before us, bringing desolation and ruin, perhaps annihilation.'

Bismarck, whose spies had been at work in France, was a prey to no such fearful apprehensions. He knew that a combined German army, although outnumbered, should prove a much better machine than the strutting, red-breeched, wasp-waisted pantomime across the Rhine. He knew that those boulevard bravos, shouting that they were 'ready to the last gaiter button,' had not half enough buttons to go round. He had seen the decadence of the Second Empire at first hand.

As far as the Crown Princess was concerned the first speck had appeared in the sky in March. Fritz had come to her boudoir looking worried. He wanted her to consult her mother on a 'profoundly secret' matter. Prussia was vitally concerned. Her opinion was wanted *in private*.

Letters had arrived for the King of Prussia from General Prim, Dictator of Spain, which country had two years before driven its Bourbon Queen, Isabella, into exile. Spain wanted a new sovereign. It had not got to be a Bourbon. General Prim begged King William of Prussia to nominate as candidate for the Throne of Spain his kinsman, Prince Leopold of Hohenzollern—Sigmaringen. General Prim assured the King that his nomination would be universally acclaimed by the people of Spain.

The project was put to Prince Leopold. He categorically refused. He said that the immediate result of acceptance would be a war with France, for Napoleon III would never

allow the Prussians to meddle in Spain. To him it would spell the encirclement of France. King William agreed with Prince Leopold, as did most of the Hohenzollerns. The Spanish affair was pregnant with dangerous possibilities. On the other hand, the offer should not be turned down out of hand, for if General Prim were to follow up the Prussian refusal by an offer to some other Royal family, it would clearly be a setback to the growing prestige of the Hohenzollerns. Queen Victoria declined to express an opinion *in private*. Lord Clarendon strongly advised her to keep out of the affair. He also thought Napoleon III would be ready to take up arms.

The Prussian refusal had no effect on General Prim. Letter after letter arrived from Spain. He grew more and more pressing, more and more flattering in his eulogies of Hohenzollern princes. At last Prince Leopold accepted the offer and King William did not stand in his way.

In France the tempest burst in full force. Napoleon III was beside himself.

At this point Bismarck must have been a very interested spectator. For Bismarck had secretly arranged the whole thing. General Prim was his bribed tool. It looked as if the scheme was going to fail on account of the prudence of Prince Leopold; but it had worked. Bismarck waited for France to declare war on Prussia.

He was badly disappointed. Prince Leopold, horrified at the possibility that he should be the cause of a major war, withdrew his candidature. The Hohenzollerns, from King William downwards, breathed again, as the fury of Napoleon III cooled at the news of the Prussian withdrawal. Bismarck had believed that once the Prussians had allowed their Prince to put his name forward, Teuton obstinacy and pride would stop them from relenting whatever the cost. He had miscalculated. He would have to try again.

His opportunity came sooner than he had expected. King William was taking his annual cure at Ems. Everybody was happy and on holiday now the crisis was over. The French Ambassador arrived at Ems. It was against all

precedent to require audience of the King while he took his summer cure. But the Ambassador was acting on the orders of his Emperor. The audience was granted. Fully aware of the fear inspired in Germany at the threat of war with France, Napoleon's Ambassador came to the old King, overbearing and offensive, and in the name of Napoleon III he demanded a personal assurance from the King of Prussia that he would never again allow Prince Leopold to put forward his claim to the Spanish Throne.

This was an outrage. King William told the Ambassador as much. No such promise should be made to the French Emperor. He dismissed the Ambassador. He telegraphed an account of the interview to Bismarck in Berlin and Bismarck saw there was still hope for his scheme.

That potent weapon, the Press, was entirely under the Chancellor's thumb. A garbled and exaggerated account of the Ems telegram was sent to the newspapers of Germany. Bismarck summoned his tame writers about him. Insults, libels, vicious abuse against Emperor Napoleon, against the people of France, against French institutions, scrawled across the front pages of every influential German newspaper. Europe was dumbfounded. Such a crazy attack in print by one State on another had never been heard of before. The storm of passionate words grew wilder and wilder. It is difficult to see what the German editors thought they were going to gain from their paper assault. But one thing they did not expect as a result of it was a declaration of war from Napoleon III. The proud French adventurer was not going to stand this. Why should he? He had a better army than the Germans. He would invade the country of these ill-mannered beasts and teach them a lesson.

So, while the editors of Germany wailed and shook with fright and panic-stricken Germans near the frontier prepared to evacuate their homes, Bismarck sat smiling to himself as he completed his arrangements to divide the soldiers of Germany into three armies of invasion under Prussian leadership. In Paris they were shouting: "To Berlin!"; the

frightened Berliners were more modest. They contented themselves by shouting, "To the Rhine!"

It was always the ill-luck of the Crown Princess that she became a mother on the eve of Prussia's going to war. Consequently, she was always in weak health when she most needed her courage and resolution. This time the new infant was Princess Sophie, who afterwards married Constantine of Greece.

Vicky's letters home were almost incoherent. She was distracted, brokenhearted. The christening of little Sophie in the private chapel at New Palace was a celebration of dreadful gloom. All the men, including Bismarck, were in field uniform. At the end of the service they would say good-bye, perhaps for ever. The old King was going with his troops, but he was so shaken that he could not hold his grandchild at the font. The Queen stepped forward and took Sophie out of his arms and presented the child for him. The younger children were crying and irritable, and little Victoria kept sobbing: "Don't let the man hurt baby!" Vicky herself was on the verge of a breakdown. That morning early she and Fritz had taken the sacrament together. To-morrow, or the next day, he had to leave with the troops.

But, the Crown Princess was not too overcome to summon Count Bismarck when she left the chapel and argue with him about Prussia's irrational attitude toward England.

'The English are more hated at this moment than the French,' she informs her mother, 'and Lord Granville (the Foreign Minister) more than Beneditti. Of course, *cela a rejailli* on my poor innocent head. I have fought many a battle about Lord Granville, indignant at hearing my old friend so attacked, but all parties agree in making him out *French*. I picked a quarrel about it on the day of the christening, tired and miserable as I was. I sent for Bismarck up into my room on purpose to say my say about Lord Granville, but he would not believe me, and said, with a smile, "But his acts prove it." Fritz, of course, does not believe it, but I think the King and Queen do.'

It was true that bitter words were being hurled at the Crown Princess because she was thought pro-English ; but she had only herself to thank for it. As a Prussian Princess it was not her business to defend Lord Granville or to concern herself at all in the policy of England. At the same time, a story was circulating in Berlin which made things worse for the Crown Princess. Bernstoff, the Prussian Ambassador at the Court of St. James's, had reported that the Prince of Wales had dined with the French Ambassador, and at the dinner table had announced in loud tones that he hoped the Prussians would be defeated and that the Austrians would join the French. 'The King and everyone are horrified at Bertie's speech which is quoted everywhere,' complained Vicky. When the Queen answered her daughter's letter she did not mention Bertie, so perhaps she really believed he had used the words alleged. Bertie stoutly denied them. But that did not ease his sister's plight. The Prussians believed the Crown Princess and the Prince of Wales to be intimate friends, and therefore companions in perfidy. Possibly, Vicky was foolish enough to make matters worse by trying to defend her brother.

Vicky and Fritz had agreed to dispense with a formal leave-taking. It would be more than either could bear. Yet the manner in which he chose to make his departure was perhaps more drastic than his wife had bargained for. It was a pathetic instance of being cruel in order to be kind.

At half-past five next morning, while his wife still slept, Fritz slipped out of bed and put on his field uniform. A carriage was waiting to take him into Berlin, and his baggage was taken down. He went along to the nurseries and woke the children. When Vicky found him gone he knew that she would think he would be returning from headquarters in the evening. He made the children promise not to tell their mother until bed-time that he was gone for good. The only member of his family who saw him to the carriage was four-year-old Victoria, weeping bitterly, and tugging at her father to hold him back. He scribbled a note in pencil and told his daughter to give it to her mother in the evening. Then

he mounted the carriage, and drove away through the countryside in the cool summer morning, wondering if he would ever see his family and his beloved New Palace again.

'He has gone without kiss or a word of farewell, and I do not know whether I shall ever see him again,' wrote Vicky. 'I hardly know what I am writing. I cannot stop my tears. My own darling Fritz—Heaven protect and watch over his precious life! Oh, that I could be with him. How willingly would I change place with any of his servants!'

XIII

The first news of victory came eleven days later, when the details of the Crown Prince's triumph at Worth came over the wires. Prussia was stunned. MacMahon's terrible Army of the Rhine was crushed with one blow. For the first time since 1815 soldiers of France had suffered defeat in a pitched battle.

At New Palace the jubilant family gathered round the relics from the front—a battered Cuirassier helmet, a ripped tri-colour surmounted by the Imperial eagle, the town keys of Nancy and Bar-le-Duc. The boys and Hinzpeter hurried to the balcony with the captured colour, and there they fixed it. They stood beside it and the Crown Princess joined them. Local inhabitants collected to cheer the wife and children of the victor of Worth. Soon a stream of excited Potsdamers were passing below the balcony, singing and waving hats and handkerchiefs. The boys and their mother appeared again and again.

The Crown Princess was every bit a Prussian now. Without any prompting, without seeking any permission, she issued to the Press of the world a letter to all Prussians wherever they might be. It does her honour for she wrote from the bottom of her heart. But she did not gain much credit by it. It astonished Prussians, for she was the last person from whom Prussians expected such an exhortation. It seemed to many almost bad taste, if not downright hypocrisy.

'Once more has Germany called her sons to take arms for her most sacred possessions, her honour, and her independence,' she wrote. 'A foe, whom we have not molested, begrudges us the fruits of our victories, the development of our national industries by our peaceful labour. Insulted and injured in all that is most dear to them, our German people have grasped their well-tried arms and gone forth to protect hearth and home and family. During the last war, Germans in every quarter of the globe responded nobly when called upon to prove their love for the Fatherland by helping to relieve the suffering. Let us join hands once more and prove that we are able and willing to succour the families of those brave men who are ready to sacrifice life and limb for us! Let us give freely, promptly, that the men who are fighting for our sacred rights may go into battle with the confident assurance that at least the destinies of those who are dearest to them are confided in faithful hands.'

'VICTORIA, CROWN PRINCESS.'

While Queen Augusta organized the hospital services at Berlin, the Crown Princess with the family and Hinzpeter left for Homburg. With the somewhat reluctant permission of the King, who had grown suspicious of his daughter-in-law, the great barracks at Homburg had been placed at her disposal for conversion into a military hospital. King William doubted her ability to handle successfully a staff of Prussians, and events proved that his doubts were justified. A large staff of reserve doctors and nurses waited her arrival without enthusiasm. Since the Danish and Austrian Wars she had not been popular with the medical profession.

She told her mother that the doctors were 'mischievous, stupid old things,' and the nurses 'dirty, ignorant, and useless.' She was probably right; but, although she did not express her opinions of her fellow-workers so frankly to their faces as she did to her mother, her manner toward them was hardly of the kind to enlist co-operation. Her admirable arrangements, achieved despite an embittered staff, combined all the latest ideas in hospital management.

At her own expense she added what was known as the Victoria Barrack, which consisted of two wooden wards, each holding twenty-four beds. Here she took special cases, and many men probably owed their lives to her. The Victoria Barrack was always a model for cleanliness and she kept the tables plentifully supplied with flowers. It seemed that the only way she could get the windows opened in the main hospital to clear the fetid air was to throw them up herself when she made her rounds. The men loved her and many of them used to write her letters for years afterwards.

As for the nurses, there were moments when she appeared on the point of knocking them down. Under this unsympathetic and contemptuous treatment the puzzled and unhygienic staff were growing more and more remiss in the duties she set them. Nurses were dismissed. Indignant doctors applied for transfers. A storm was blowing up. In spite of all this unhappiness, the broadminded realized that Homburg Hospital was bringing about more successful cures than any other in Germany.

At Homburg William and Henry pursued their normal lessons with Hinzpeter. The stern tutor encouraged the spirit of patriotism in the schoolroom. He had pinned up a large-scale map and each morning before lessons the boys showed him the exact position of the armies. Their mother often attended this exciting ceremony. No wonder it was a thrilling moment, for the French were disintegrating with amazing speed. Without doubt, God was on the side of the Germans. Patriotic fervour went even further than a map. Hinzpeter encouraged them to buy special editions of the newspapers reporting victories and to make them into lanterns to illuminate the schoolroom by oiling them.

William describes an interesting occasion during their life at Homburg. It was early September. Emperor Napoleon, with MacMahon's army of 120,000, had surrendered at Sedan. It was a year of miracles! 'Henry and I were already in bed,' says William, 'when the noise of the great crowd shouting in the streets floated up to us, mingled with

the strains of music from a neighbouring bandstand while the room was flooded with light from below our windows. Up we jumped in our nightshirts and looked out, and there we saw a torchlight procession of the local fire brigade, the architect Jacoby who had come to congratulate the Crown Princess. The news of the success, the glare of the torches, the wild excitement, and the songs of the multitude all combined to make us forget everything else in that portentous moment—least of all did we remember that we could be clearly seen by everyone out of doors in our white nightshirts; so that we were not prepared for the dreadful lecture that Hinzpeter gave us next morning, rebuking us for being a law unto ourselves.'

Reports of serious friction at Homburg Hospital reached the ears of King William, who was with the armies. Very displeased, he refused to consider his son's arguments that the Homburg Hospital had become the best in Germany, and he ordered the Crown Princess to return to Berlin. There she assumed the role of companion to Queen Augusta. Although the King did not mean this as a punishment, it actually amounted to this; for, in her old age, Queen Augusta was a difficult woman. She had grown hard and soulless. Nobody sought her company a moment longer than was necessary. She meant well, for 'she had a good heart,' as the Princess told her mother.

So, though the last weary phase of the war was by no means so anxious for the Crown Princess, since Fritz was comparatively safe, it was a great deal more trying to her temper even than the dirty nurses and the ignorant doctors at Homburg. The worst part of all was having to spend every evening sitting with the Queen, who was in her most bitter and argumentative periods at that time of day.

'You say you are glad that my Mama-in-law and I get on well now together,' read Queen Victoria. 'The wretchedness of my life when we do not, you do not know.'

Vicky went on to explain that she fought the Queen's battles and smoothed her path whenever she could. She bore no malice or resentment, but she suffered much. Clearly,

she was conducting herself with unusual restraint in circumstances very troublesome to her temperament. When Queen Augusta grew cantankerous during those dismal evenings in the Royal boudoir Vicky refused to be drawn—except when the Queen abused the English, as everybody in Prussia was doing at that time. ‘Of course, I cannot hear a word said against England,’ confesses Vicky. ‘I give it back (I fear not always gently) when I hear sharp words.’

Sometimes, Queen Augusta liked to hold a small evening *salon* at which her friends and guests sat frigidly round the table while she talked and dispensed coffee and chocolate. Unfortunately, it was on such occasions that she preferred to criticize England; so that the indignant protests of the Crown Princess were apt to be uttered before company. The impression created by the *Engländerin* did nothing to improve her relations with the junkers. That she was fervently patriotic about the successes of Prussia on other occasions was thought a deceitful cloak for her true sentiments.

Meantime, the German armies reached the outskirts of Paris. Though the French Army was shattered, the Parisians had no intention of submitting. They believed that Gambetta, who escaped from the city in a balloon, was forming a new army which would drive away the besiegers. On October 22nd the Crown Prince wrote in his diary: ‘To-day the first works were begun for building the siege batteries. Though I have ordered the preparations for a siege to be carried out with the greatest energy, I am still in hopes that Paris will be forced simply and solely by hunger to open her gates to us, and that many lives will thus be spared.’

A fortnight later the Germans were still inactive around Paris. Autumnal peace reigned in the woods and environs separating the invaders from the city. But Thiers had rushed angrily back to Paris after his attempt to arrange an armistice in the German camp. Bismarck wanted too much.

‘So now no choice is left us but to take Paris,’ the Crown

Prince told himself. 'All the same, I still hold by my policy of starving the city out, for this procedure, cruel though it seems, will spare more lives than a regular siege and storming of the city would cost us.'

'Extremely desirous of seeing the bombardment begin immediately,' Bismarck laid siege to his King—the Old Master,' as he now chose to call the sovereign whom he despised and yet found necessary to 'his spiritual well-being.' Bismarck's friends were at work on the home front. Presently, Berlin was in a fever of indignation against the delayed activity at Paris. Why did not the bombardment begin? It was because the *Englanderin's* mother kept writing from London urging her daughter to restrain the Crown Prince from harming the wretched Parisians. That was the general opinion; and although it was an entirely false supposition, the people who were putting it about can hardly be blamed for so doing.

Naturally, Fritz was writing to his wife about the projected bombardment of Paris in the same tones which he used in his diary. Naturally, she was as sickened at the idea of a bombardment as he was. She needed no invitation to express abhorrence of the bombardment before the Queen, at dinner parties or before anyone who was ready to listen to her. Since the coming bombardment was the topic of conversation which transcended all others on every occasion, she found plenty of opportunities for airing her views. It was not surprising that the people decided her mother was behind her, considering the fierce anti-British feeling of the times. If the Crown Princess had really been trying to use her influence to stop the bombardment, she might be accorded more respect for her sturdy words in defence of Paris; but she was not. She was merely expressing her *view*—a view which nobody wanted to hear, and one which was gravely damaging Anglo-German relations and her husband's reputation.

'In Berlin it is now the order of the day to vilify my wife as being mainly responsible for the postponement of the bombardment of Paris and to accuse her of acting under the

direction of the Queen of England,' runs the entry of December 14th in Crown Prince Frederick's diary. 'All this exasperates me beyond measure. Countess Bismarck and Countess Amelia Donhoff have repeated the scandal quite openly.'

Such being the atmosphere of Berlin, where according to the Crown Prince the bombardment had become a 'perfect mania,' was a further misfortune for the reputation of his wife that, though bombardment had now been agreed upon in principle, it still had to be delayed until a proper siege train and huge quantities of ammunition could be assembled from great distances.

Thoughtlessness can lead to the gravest consequences. This reflection painfully afflicted Queen Victoria when she opened a large parcel from the Crown Princess on the morning of January 6th. It was a beautiful Chinese screen.

When French shells bursting on the Palace of St. Cloud set the building on fire, Prussian troops rushed into the fire to see what they could 'save.' One soldier emerged with the Chinese screen, which he had brought from Empress Eugénie's boudoir. General Kirbach, who was watching, either bought or commandeered the *objet d'art*. The General, a great admirer of the beauty of the Crown Princess, thought the screen would look very well in New Palace. He asked King William's permission to send the 'trophy of war' as a present to the Crown Princess. It was granted.

The present from the General made the Crown Princess feel very uneasy. Empress Eugénie had always been kind to her. She did not want to keep it. Besides, she did not approve of 'ladies' possessing war trophies, though 'for soldiers they are lawful.' She therefore sent the trophy to her mother.

'I would ask you, dearest Mama,' she said, 'to restore this screen to the Empress when you think fit.'

Horried at the mission entrusted to her, the Queen at once wrote to the Earl of Granville to ask advice. It seemed to her that Vicky had put not only her mother but *England* in a dangerous predicament. King William might consider

the screen a trophy of war, but to the world at large it was nothing more than *loot*. To return the screen to Empress Eugénie would be a tacit admission from the Queen of England that the King of Prussia was a freebooter, and French propagandists would instantly issue to the world damning proof of Prussian villainy—nor would they be likely to conceal the manner in which the screen was returned. Terrific animosity, as a result, would be stirred up among Prussians, not only against England, but also against their own Crown Princess, who would appear to them nothing better than a traitress.

Lord Granville was wholly in agreement with the Queen. "In this country war trophies mean flags and guns, etc.; the presents taken from palaces and country houses, which are said to have been sent in great quantities from France to Germany, would be called here acts of plunder, or looting," he agreed. "It would be difficult for Your Majesty to receive as a present something which is known to have been taken from the palace of a State with which Your Majesty is in friendly alliance; and there is something awkward in restoring, to the Empress here, that which belongs to the State in France. The offer might be refused, and the French *entourage* might make much of this proof of plunder."

Five days after the package had reached Queen Victoria it was re-delivered at New Palace.

XIV

On January 19th Queen Augusta was almost in a state of collapse in her Berlin palace. Fury and indignation were the cause of her condition. News had reached her that since the previous day she had become *die Deutsche Kaiserin-Königin*—the Empress of Germany and Queen of Prussia. Not one word of warning had reached her, even from King William. She was disgusted at the glory bestowed upon her. She was so disgusted and outraged that she commanded her daughter-in-law, who had a terrible time while calming her, to inform Queen Victoria that 'she knew nothing what-

ever of the adoption of the Imperial title,' and 'resented the proceeding very much.'

Augusta's rage was no more vehement than had been that of King William at Versailles several days before, when the King of Bavaria, heading the German sovereigns, came to invite him to be their *Kaiser-Konigen*. He was a plain Prussian soldier. To be King of Prussia was good enough for him. The 'old Master' had never been so pig-headed, and for an hour or so it looked as if the cherished friends of Bismarck, and, for that matter, of the Crown Prince—in this instance the two men had seen eye to eye—were going to be wrecked by the obstinacy and the conservatism of King William. But, as always in the end, the 'old Master' gave way. On January 18th he stood impatiently in the Hall of Mirrors at Versailles, surrounded by the sovereigns of Germany and his triumphant generals, while, with blaring cavalry trumpets, they proclaimed him German Emperor.

So averse to the whole business was King William that he wrote not one word about it to his wife. The Crown Princess reported to her mother that she and Fritz were now called *Kaiserliche und Konigliche Hoheit Kronprinz des Deutschen Reichs und von Preussen*. Everybody addressed her as Imperial Highness, but she preferred her old title. The matter-of-factness with which the Crown Princess accepts this stupendous change in her fortunes shows plainly in her letters to England. In consideration of the fact that the happening which had been the goal of her ambition—the unity of the German States under Prussian leadership—had come to pass, her cold attitude is astonishing. Had she become disillusioned and disheartened through seeing Prussia fast in the iron grip of Bismarck? For the moment, perhaps, her resolution shaken by the trials of the war, she gazed into a hopeless future.

Soon her courage reawakened. She was eager for new battles. She imagined herself in a position of greater power. Bismarck was to get into the way of thinking that he had more cause to watch the Crown Princess, especially in regard to her relations with England, than he had done in

the past. Presently, Crown Princess and Chancellor would be as near open enmity as was possible in their respective positions, and in a few years William was to enter into the tussle.

Bismarck, assailed behind his back by the Crown Princess as 'medieval altogether,' 'the sole and omnipotent ruler of our destinies,' 'intolerable and very dangerous,' 'he on whose good or bad humour depends our safety and peace,' and aware that the Royal mother in England referred to him as 'violent, grasping, unprincipled, that *no one* can stand it, like the first Napoleon, a terrible man,' was content to remark to Lady Odo Russell at the British Embassy that 'he was able to agree with the Crown Prince, but he fears that will never be possible with the Crown Princess.'

The war was over. The Emperor of Germany was coming to his capital. Berlin and Potsdam lived in a frenzy during the spring and summer of 1871. William drove with Empress Augusta and his mother to meet the Emperor and the Crown Prince at Wildpark Station, Potsdam. To him the days were a golden dream. His mother's apathetic state puzzled, even antagonized, him. He went with his father to the opening of the first *Reichstag* of the Empire in the White Hall of Berlin Castle. He pondered in an awed trance over the ancient Imperial Throne of the Holy Roman Empire, which his father had ordered to be sent from Goslar for the grand revival of Germanic glory. The kindred strain of romanticism in father and son brought them close together. The romanticism of Crown Prince Frederick made him the noblest Prussian of them all. Romanticism in the son—running wild by virtue of a clumsy upbringing—made his headlong plunge into life even more reckless than otherwise it would have been.

Together, William and his father apprised the three water-colour designs for an Imperial Crown and Insignia submitted on invitation by Counts Stillfried, Harrach, and Seckendorff. Stillfried's was laid aside. It was too prosaic—too much like the insignia of England, un-German, out of harmony with the Holy Roman Empire. It was the design

the Crown Princess liked best. The other two water-colours father and sun hung up on the wall in the ante-room of the Crown Prince's workroom. On the frame of Seckendorff's Crown Prince, Frederick stuck a label 'Not approved.' Under Harrach's picture the label said 'Good.' Harrach's was pure medieval German. It seems that the Crown Princess regarded this ingenuous performance with impatience.

Her reawakening ambitions for Greater Germany lay in practical, not idealistic, channels. This child'splay was pitiable, while the shadow of Bismarck blackened the German map. 'My mother, who knew of this weakness of the Crown Prince in favour of that older Imperialism, was always trying to combat it,' records William, 'but he never fully grasped the reason why. Later, he came to think of this as just part of her instinctive anti-German urge.'

Seldom had Crown Prince Frederick walked about so jubilantly. His eyes shone, his step was springy. At this moment, relations between Crown Prince and Chancellor were almost friendly, but this was to be only a passing phase, engendered by their odd collaboration in bringing about the unity of Germany. Frederick William had played a much bigger part in the preliminary discussions, arguments, stratagems, and coaxings which had come into play to win over the German sovereigns than Bismarck was ready to admit. It was in his policy to claim the lion's share of credit for himself. Indeed, when robbed of a fair measure of the credit for the making of the German Empire by the unauthorized publication in the Press of extracts of the Crown Prince's war diary, which Heinrich Geffcken—Frederick William's friend and adviser—issued shortly after the Crown Prince's tragic death, Bismarck, boiling with fury, tried to have the fatal and well-meaning Geffcken tried for high treason for revealing diaries which were owned by the State.

The Potsdam garrison returned from France, reached Wildpark Station in a series of trains on July 13th, and in the glorious summer weather Crown Prince Frederick, with his

wife beside him in the uniform of her Hussar regiment, and William in that of the 1st Regiment of Foot Guards, rode through the rejoicing throngs to the adjoining park where the troops, hung with flowers, garlands, and laurel wreaths, had drawn up. The Crown Prince, too, was liberally bedecked; his helmet, his charger, his sword hilt took on a gay drapery, even the tops of his jack-boots were filled with flowers.

Three days later, Imperial Germany's mighty march of victory crashed in the goose step over the burning surface of the Linden. Ahead of that breathless spectacle, flashing in the golden sunlight, went the old Emperor, the Crown Prince, and William riding behind on his dapple pony. Hundreds of French guns came rolling and rattling from the Tempelhof Feld after the sweating, hard-faced phalanxes, which streamed through the triumphant streets of Berlin. Germany had found herself.

At Castle Square, before the draped bronze equestrian statue, where the fifty-six captured French eagles lay upon the steps, a gold and scarlet canopy kept off the sun from the Empress, the Crown Princess, the Princesses, and the Duchesses. The Emperor waved his sword, the drapery fell, the gunfire crashed over the city, and the air was full of martial music. "He, too, will never forget this day," murmured the old Emperor, patting William on the shoulder.

XV

'He is not possessed of brilliant abilities, nor of any strength of character or talents, but he is a dear boy, and I hope and trust will grow up a useful man. He has an excellent tutor; I never saw or knew a better, and all the care that can be bestowed on mind and body is taken of him. I watch over him myself, over each detail, even the minutest, of his education, as his Papa had never had the time to occupy himself with the children. I am happy to say that between him and me there is a bond of love and confidence which I feel sure nothing can destroy.'

'I am sure you watch over your dear boy with the greatest

care, but I often think too great care; too much constant watching leads to the very dangers hereafter which one wishes to avoid,' commented Queen Victoria at the end of the Franco-Prussian War, in reply to her daughter's words about William. She could see now that dearest Albert had tried to rear Bertie with 'too great care.' She had gained deep insight into her daughter's character since she had gone to Germany. As for the 'bond of love and confidence, which nothing can destroy,' the Queen may have been ready to put her faith in that, since she only saw William and his mother together on holidays, when mother and son were most easily in harmony. The near future was to show just what the 'bond of love and confidence' was worth; and probably at this very time, when the Crown Princess wrote the words and when William was twelve—an age when sensitive and over-stimulated boys may seek intimate spiritual attachment with their mothers—the bond was a reality more in the impulsive mind of his mother than in actual fact. That unshakable conviction of her infallibility, which was a part of her, would not admit that she could be partaker in anything but an ideal mother-and-son friendship with this baffling child, who owed so much to her tireless care of him.

In one letter to Queen Victoria there is a rather curious passage which shows how highly the Crown Princess regarded Hinzpeter, and how anxious she was to humour him.

'I hardly like to ask,' she begins, '—still I will venture—will you send some mark of your approbation to Willy's excellent tutor, Dr. Hinzpeter, to whom the boys owe everything? You know it has not always been very easy for me, nor have I always been in the doctor's good graces, but he has bravely done his duty by the boys. A mark of encouragement would, I am sure, give the greatest pleasure—such as a few words written, and a print of yourself!'

It was Bismarck's opinion that the Crown Princess and Hinzpeter saw eye to eye during the seventies, and that the tutor could be regarded as a reliable mirror of the Crown Princess's reactions to current politics. He therefore took the prudent course of having Hinzpeter sounded from time to

time, during these years when he believed the Princess especially militant and anti-German in her aims, and at least one incident not without its humorous side involving this picturesque human triangle—the Crown Princess, Bismarck, Hinzpeter—has been recorded.

Periodically the Chancellor attended evening parties at the Crown Prince's Berlin Palace in the winter. One evening Bismarck singled out the tutor and entered into a long conversation with him. Bismarck's object in doing this was to sound the tutor about his opinions regarding a projected stroke of policy, which the Chancellor had in mind. Hinzpeter, not unflattered at such a mark of consideration from the great Prussian, expressed himself very freely, and Bismarck went elsewhere satisfied that he knew what kind of letter the *Englanderin* would shortly be writing to her mother, and what moves might possibly be set afoot in consequence in certain British Embassies.

The Crown Princess had watched the Chancellor and Hinzpeter in earnest conversation. She beckoned Hinzpeter to her.

"What was Count Bismarck discussing with you at such length?" she asked lightly.

The tutor told her.

"I see," she murmured. "Well, I would very much like you to write for me a memorandum of your very interesting conversation. I want to digest it at leisure."

Hinzpeter was nothing if not a precise pedant. He wrote down the conversation at length, and then in his innocence, thinking that he had not perhaps done entire justice to the words of the Chancellor, he posted the memorandum to the Foreign Office with the request that Count Bismarck would sign and make any necessary emendations before it was presented to the Crown Princess.

Next morning a sealed envelope reached Hinzpeter. Inside was his memorandum. There was no acknowledgment, no letter of explanation, no signature, nor any emendations. If it is possible to comprehend how the Crown Princess and her partisans disturbed and aggravated Bismarck with his

purely 'Old Prussian' outlook, it is equally simple to sympathise with the Crown Princess who, at another evening party, when the Chancellor was present, gazed across the room with a melancholy expression at her gigantic guest, then looked at the glass of lemonade in her hand, saying: "The tears I have shed over that man would overflow this tumbler!"

With the coming of the seventies, the annual summer visits of the family of the Crown Prince and Princess to England, and generally to Osborne, became very memorable events for the children. The family now embraced William, Charlotte, Henry, Victoria, Waldemar, and Sophy. Margaret was born in 1872. Their mother had only just reached her thirties, and although in Prussia the troubled atmosphere in which she moved made her conduct herself like a woman of maturer years, at Osborne she opened out like a flower, and to her younger children Vicky was a most enchanting mother. Her transformation began the moment she landed on English soil, and the people shouted: "God bless our Princess Royal!"

Above all places, Osborne was her spiritual home, and must always remain so. If the shade of her beloved father walked anywhere, it would walk at Osborne. He had designed the house, chosen the pictures and the wall papers, planted the trees and the flowering shrubs with his own hands, laid out the smooth green sweeps of lawn which fell away to the sea.

When she played with the younger children in her father's cherished gardens or walked with them through the flowery lanes of the beautiful island, her restless heart was at peace because it was as if Prince Albert was beside her, the smiling grandfather of her attractive little brood.

William and Henry were often absent, employed about the more manly pursuits they chose for themselves, such as firing the brass cannon with gay Aunt Beatrice in grandfather's miniature fort outside Swiss Cottage. Maybe, Vicky wondered whether Prince Albert would have approved of her eldest son; he had frowned often enough upon

Bertie, and Bertie was a better specimen—in mind and body. Her father could not reproach her with not having devoted herself to William. She was doing her best to make William like HIM—the perfect ideal of every would-be leader of nations. If only Waldemar had been her eldest, or darling Sigismund, she knew that the shade of Prince Albert would not then have borne a wrinkled brow.

It is not surprising really that in later life the girls were liable to refer without thinking to Osborne as home when they were in Prussia. With a youthful, almost juvenile, mother, they played at cooking in Swiss Cottage, just as she had done with her sisters in the old days. She was the big sister again. With her intense vitality awakened to the full by old associations and memories, she took them back into the past and made them a part of the happy mid-Victorian family, which had spent their days in busy endeavour inside and outside Swiss Cottage.

Some people have refused to believe the genuineness of the Prussian complaint that the Crown Princess brought up her children to talk of England as home, and believe it was merely one of the slanders of Bismarck, yet Princess Victoria, in her memoirs, actually mentions an incident which substantiates this accusation.

'On one occasion,' she writes, 'I am told (though I do not remember it) my brother William and I had a difference. "After all," I am reported to have said, "that is much better managed at home." "At home?" he asked, "what do you mean?" "Why, at home in England," I replied. It seems very slight for people to dwell upon.'

Whether or not Princess Victoria remembered the occasion, whether or not this particular incident did take place, the fact remains that Princess Victoria finds nothing abnormal in the putting into her mouth of words at which a proud and patriotic German of Imperial days could hardly be blamed for taking deep umbrage.

From the foregoing, we may judge, if we have not already decided the point, that William at no time was tempted to look at England as *home*. At the same time England was,

year by year, making a tremendous impression upon William. Partly, this was due to an intense kind of pro-English propaganda driven into him by his mother; as a result of which, realization during his visits that she had hardly exaggerated in her glowing descriptions filled his young mind with a mixture of awed wonder and deep, simmering envy, which was growing to be instinctive in his warped outlook, and which was to end in that grim inferiority complex that made him mad to excel over all else on earth, an urge finally transmitted from himself to the mind of the nation he was destined to dominate.

But the greatest attraction which William found in England was his Royal grandmother. Perhaps William grew to love his grandmother more than any other human being, because he respected her, feared her, even hated her more wholeheartedly than anybody else. She was awful, unfathomable, infinitely kind, magnificently exasperating, a fabulous sovereign of an endless Empire. Nothing could be more marvellous than to rule humanity on the grand scale as Queen Victoria ruled it. It thrilled him to the marrow to be the favoured grandson of this miraculous Queen.

In William's relations with his English grandmother it cannot be overlooked that his injured arm unavoidably played a sinister psychological part. William had not then mastered the art of living with a useless limb as he did in later life, and he was tragically aware how much his awkwardness discomforted his English relations. Nobody refused to notice William's defect so obstinately as did Queen Victoria, and her clumsiness in this respect made it obvious to the crippled grandson that she was more put out by it, perhaps more filled by pity by it, than any of the others. Out of this grew an irresistible urge to show Queen Victoria, for all her doubts, that he, the crippled prince, was a better prince than other princes; that, in fact, he was as good, if not better, than her own marvellous self.

Indelible pictures of simple English occasions in the seventies were embroidered into the spangled tapestry of William's life. He could never forget that amazing, awful occasion

at a family lunch at Osborne when he listened to the clear laughter of the great Queen, saw her shoulders shaking with mirth and the tears coursing down her cheeks at a shocking *faux pas* which would have brought down Arctic silence and agonized discomfort at the table of his Prussian grandparents. Admiral Foley, that deaf, gruff, weather-beaten sea-dog, was the Queen's guest at lunch. Superintendent of Portsmouth Dockyard, the Admiral was well known to William and immensely admired, for he frequently took the young Prussian naval enthusiast around his wonderful dockyard. The Admiral had come to report to the Queen on the salvage operations on the frigate *Euridice*, which had sunk in the roads.

When the subject of *Euridice* was assumed to be exhausted, William's grandmother asked after the Admiral's sister, whom she had met. Deafness prevented the Admiral from realizing that the *Euridice* was no longer the item of Royal interest.

"Well, ma'am," he proclaimed in his loud, precise voice, "I am going to have her turned over and take a good look at her bottom and have it well scraped."

That the servants should be permitted to double up with laughter and desert the lunch table for the sanctuary of the screen for fear of dropping their dishes, that the children were free to yell with vulgar delight instead of maintaining the silence of juvenile Hohenzollerns, that the great English Queen should herself begin to explain the embarrassing truth to her bewildered Admiral, were things astonishing and attractive to the Prussian youngsters. Indeed, the spontaneous reception of universal delight which it was possible to accord to this kind of happening in the English Royal homes typified the simplicity and naturalness of Royal life in England, and contrasted to the point of rebuke with the merciless etiquette and 'Old Prussian' discipline which enslaved the minds and bodies of Prussian Royalty. William's Court, in later years, probably as a result of his English experience, was a fantastic mixture of the heartless 'Old Prussian' decorum, outdoing the frigid regime of his

grandparents, and sudden tempestuous ribaldry inspired by the ill-balanced monarch, who was capable for his own delectation of condemning with Nero-like omnipotence unwilling, elderly ministers to horse-play such as leapfrog.

Waldemar would never have dared to take out of his pocket his pet baby crocodile, 'Bob,' and let it run wild in grandmama Augusta's boudoir in Berlin. The thought of 'Bob' snapping among the shadows of Empress Augusta's satin petticoats was blasphemy. Yet Waldemar was not frightened to give 'Bob' a run in Grandmama Victoria's boudoir at Osborne. True, Grandmama Victoria was as apprehensive as Grandmama Augusta would have been, but her sense of humour did not desert her even while summoning the servants for aid, upon Waldemar's gleefully refusing to retrieve his terrifying pet. Eventually, faithful John Brown had to be called to grapple with the defiant little monster, for the duty footmen were too half-hearted in their efforts to capture it. No wonder that, when the Crown Princess's children came annually from the Prussian hot-house and boarded the *Victoria and Albert* at Flushing with the prospect ahead of such free play as this in a happy family circle, free from tutors, governesses, and Hohenzollern taboos, they were tempted to think of England as a blissful haven.

In Prussia the first problem of the Crown Princess in the seventies was the education of William. Previously she had concentrated on his upbringing and in combating the evil arm. One day she revealed to Fritz a project which she and Hinzpeter had been playing with for some time. This was that William should be sent to a public school or gymnasium, as these were called in Germany. It was a revolutionary idea. Every Hohenzollern had been educated privately. Fritz, apart from personal doubts of the feasibility of the suggestion, was confident that William I would not for one second contemplate the idea of his grandson—the future Emperor—sitting beside the sons of chemists, police inspectors, and booksellers in the classes of a gymnasium. Nor did Fritz think it would be an easy task to find a gymnasium

professor who would not be struck dumb with awe at the prospect of daily seeing the heir to the Imperial Throne among his pupils.

The plan of the Crown Princess was a harsh one. It went hand in hand with those effective lessons in horse-back riding. William, congenitally shy, and shrinking from too close contact with strangers on account of his infirmity, would have to submit to the torture of the closest inspection from boys of the people, all of whom would have a physical advantage and some, doubtless, a mental advantage over the pupil who was going to be their Emperor. William was proud enough ; she knew that. Faced by such a situation, William would simply have to shine somehow ; or, at least, his Hohenzollern obstinacy would make him strain his faculties to the utmost, which should have a beneficial strengthening influence on his character. The Crown Princess was also taken with the notion that he should receive a truly Liberal education, since he was one day to be a great Liberal Emperor, the worthy successor of his father, who would soon be the first great Liberal Emperor.

There was still another reason. The Crown Princess wanted to get William away as much as possible from the atmosphere of Berlin and Potsdam. For that air was poisoned with the pernicious ' Old Prussianism ' of Bismarck and his Emperor. She could not prevent William's seeing his grandfather, but she was not at all happy about the intimate meetings which the old Emperor was now contriving with his grandson.

The Crown Prince and Princess travelled a good deal, for their own amusement or on public business, and when the parents were away it was a habit of the Emperor to invite his grandson to dine with him *tête-à-tête*, and to inspire him with Hohenzollern ideas which were anything but Liberal in outlook. In fact, on these intimate occasions William at a most impressionable age walked right into the heart of the Bismarck influence, and from words the boy let drop his mother did not doubt that he found the experience enthralling.

XVI

The old Emperor and William used to take their meal alone in the drawing-room which led out of his study. The dishes were placed on a shaky old green baize card-table to which William I was greatly attached. The footman always brought in a bottle of champagne with the joint. The Emperor always drank two glasses of this as he talked, and the grandson was allowed his share. When the Emperor had finished his second glass, he rose, corked the bottle, held it up against the light, took a pencil from his pocket and marked the height of the remaining liquid across the label.

In the middle of April, 1873, the Crown Princess was pleased to receive at the hands of Hinzpeter the following report: 'Prince William is perfectly qualified for admission into the Upper Third class of a gymnasium, while his knowledge of mathematics would do credit to a good scholar of the Upper Third.' The report was signed by Hinzpeter, Professor Ruhle and three other professors of Joachimiske Gymnasium, Berlin. It was the result of an examination in Greek, Latin, and mathematics which had begun at 11 a.m. on April 2nd in the school-room at Kronprinzen Palace, Berlin.

William attended the opera that night with his parents as a reward for his prowess. He did not fully appreciate why his mother was so satisfied with him; for it had not been disclosed to him that the extent of his accomplishment in the examination would decide whether or no he was ready to acquit himself creditably at a gymnasium in the following year. It would also be the deciding factor, in all probability, in persuading the old Emperor to consent to the attendance of his grandson at such an institution. At first, as Fritz had prophesied, Emperor William was shocked and angry at the thought of William's receiving a public education. His obstinacy was a thing which at times tried even Bismarck to despair. But his daughter-in-law came to him herself. He had never liked her since the Danzig incident, for which he

held her chiefly responsible, as also for breaking the bond of affection between his son and himself which had existed in earlier days, while Bismarck was constantly whispering warnings into his ear against the Crown Princess.

Nevertheless, face to face with his daughter-in-law he found her extremely formidable when labouring under a conviction. He had weakened and finally given away, provided the boy was likely to acquit himself with the honour essential to a Hohenzollern in a gymnasium. As to his last feeble excuses, that the family would object and that this unprecedented step would mortify many distinguished Prussians, they were not accorded serious consideration. The Crown Princess had not much use for the Hohenzollerns, except for one or two tinged with Liberalism, and the sooner the distinguished Prussians broadened their views the better, because they would have to do so when Fritz became Emperor in a few years.

As a further reward for his scholastic achievements, William was taken by the Crown Prince and Princess on their official visit to Austria. William has recorded his memories of that visit, when the beauty of the Empress of Austria so ravished his boyish senses, with a vivid power of description which calls for quotation, since his words stand out as a further refutation of his mother's unassailable conviction that he was dull-witted, unobservant, unimaginative, and lacking in the fine parts of intellect.

William and his parents alighted on the platform at Vienna. 'I found myself,' says William, 'before the Empress. Rooted to the spot, I gazed in the dazzling beautiful face, surmounted by dark hair, and at the lovely dark eyes. I was so overcome that it was only when admonished by my mother that I remembered the Royal lady's hand.' Later, he goes on, 'Her Majesty came to tea with my mother at Hetzendorf. My mother had me brought to the garden where she was walking with the Empress. The Empress greeted me in the charmingly friendly manner so peculiarly her own, and then my mother told me to carry Her Majesty's train. I undertook the duty of a page with the

greatest enthusiasm. It could be literally said of her: she did not sit down—she took a seat—she did not stand up—she rose—she did not walk—she wended her way.'

Hinzpeter we know as a high-minded and ruthless tyrant, whose achievements with the mind and body—indeed, the soul—of William seemed to the Crown Princess when her son reached early manhood as nothing less than a miracle. When we find Hinzpeter in the early seventies jotting down the following memorandum about his pupil, we feel that he is finding in that sensitive plant just the kind of mental storm which he might expect to discover there, considering the unnatural nature of the parched, relentless regime over which he has presided as high priest. 'It was inevitable,' notes Hinzpeter, 'that such newly awakened conscience should assume strange, unexpected shapes, as, for instance, when the Prince developed a terrifying dread of hell-fire, and later when he got in the way of inventing his own prayers—the intercession of the Almighty on his behalf to help him with his lessons in school hours.'

The parents had decided that William was to be confirmed before going to a gymnasium, and that process for a Hohenzollern prince was a formidable undertaking, calling for intensive preparation. The candidate for Hohenzollern confirmation needed to be guided into a state of considerable clarity of religious thought, since the essence of the ceremony consisted of the frightful traditional ordeal of public Confession of Faith—the dreaded *Glaubensbekenntniss*.

The candidate must compose this for himself. In one breath it was explained to the youthful candidate that he must frankly reveal his soul; in the next, he was told that no Hohenzollern had ever made an unorthodox Confession of Faith.

It is hardly surprising, in view of the religious tempest in William's mind, that Hinzpeter had to record, 'He found considerable difficulty in formulating a confession of faith. With this aim in view the Prince would go for solitary walks along the Scheveningen to meditate.' If Hinzpeter found that his pupil had returned from one of his meditative



Painting in the Royal Collection by L. Tuxen

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Queen Victoria seated with her German relations in Buckingham Palace after the Thanksgiving Service at Westminster Abbey, June 1877. Crown Prince Frederick of Germany in white uniform rests his hand on the chair as he stands to right of Queen Victoria. Seated female figure in foreground to the right of the Queen is the Crown Princess of Germany, with little Prince Theodore of Saxe-Weimarer at her knee. The Prince of Wales stands behind the Queen and the Duke of Connaught on her left, with the Princess of Wales beside him. The head and shoulders of Prince William, in Messer Jacket, may be seen in the extreme left background. Beside him in naval uniform is Prince George of Wales, afterwards George V.

perambulations without having settled in his mind the point which was under consideration for that day, it was his habit to send him back again to seek the inspiration on the waves, and when necessary this was repeated a third time. By this means William was eventually able to arrive at a pure and high-sounding *Glaubensbekenntniss*, which might bore the Almighty but would indubitably satisfy even Queen Augusta.

It was 11 a.m. on September 1st, 1874, when William, with his mother and father, alighted outside the Friedenskirche, and the three walked into the cloisters to wait for the coming of the Emperor and Empress. The younger children, the Hohenzollerns and other favoured persons, were already in the body of the church. Below the altar rails stood a low platform, with a temporary altar draped in the pall from Sigismund's coffin and a prayer desk and chair for William. The two rows of chairs stretching before the platform were reserved for the Royal Family. The rest of the company were resigned to a long session afoot.

Pale and challenging in mien, Prince William took his place at the prayer desk. With his stiff-necked uniform and his studied posture he stood there, a youthful replica of the braggart war lord, who before many years would shake his fist at a shrinking Europe.

He unfolded his *Glaubensbekenntniss*. Henry and Charlotte started to weep with emotion. His mother and father were not unaffected. The Empress 'was deeply moved and so was the Emperor—but, alas, his influence on the child's education whenever he enforces it is *very hurtful*!' wrote the Crown Princess to her mother that evening. Loudly and calmly William proclaimed his Confession—another triumph for Hinzpeter. Then the pastor came forward to ask his forty questions of the Prince. Speaking as loudly and calmly as before, Prince William took half an hour to answer them. Three long addresses by the clergy followed, which, according to the mother of the candidate, 'Might have been better and shorter, still they did not spoil the ceremony! . . . As you like to hear little details,' she went on

to tell Queen Victoria, 'I will add that I was in black with a plain white *crêpe lisse* bonnet. Sometimes I feel too young for the mother of a son already confirmed, and then at times too old!'

Bertie and Alix had come for the occasion from England. Let Uncle Bertie, in a few years the bitter enemy of nephew William, carry on the story. 'Willy went through his examination admirably,' he wrote to Balmoral. 'I was only too glad to take the sacrament with Vicky and Fritz and Willy, after the ceremony, and the service is almost the same as ours. Willy was much pleased with your presents which were laid out in my sitting-room. Your letter to him and the inscription you wrote in the Bible I thought beautiful and I read them to him.'

According to William's mother, the present from his grandmother which pleased him most was a large portrait of Prince Albert.

Two days after the ceremony William and Henry had to depart for the gymnasium of Cassel. Cassel had been chosen not because of its scholastic record nor because it was situated in an old country town with no outside interests to disturb the Princes, but because of all the headmasters approached, Director Vogt was the only one to behave in a natural manner when faced with the prospect of taking the Hohenzollerns into the fold. Two days only had to elapse; yet not until after the confirmation did the Crown Princess reveal to William and his brother that they were about to go to Cassel.

It was a terrible shock. For a moment it left William speechless. Fright and resentment rose up inside him. Finally, the words he stammered angrily were quite in character.

"But—I may come out lower on the list than the other boys." His eyes were wet. The weak mouth quivered in the pale, pretty face of the fifteen-year-old. The mania to excel was getting its grip on him.

Hinzpeter was to accompany his pupils to Cassel and to live with them, and it was his idea that they should proceed

to Cassel by stages in a walking tour. The remarkable description in his diary of the entrance to Cassel illuminates somewhat the mentality of this strange tutor, of whom the Crown Princess thought so highly.

' We entered Cassel in a peculiar fashion, in deliberate antithesis to the public imagination,' he says. ' We cheerfully sat in the enclosure for yeomen on the bowling green of a coachmen's beer-house, partaking of sour beer and hard bread. It was raining, and I held my umbrella over the lunch to prevent the beer from becoming still more watery, for we needed strengthening after a hard march. Then we heard the whistle of an engine, and by this knew that at that moment the Emperor was arriving in Cassel in triumph in a comfortable saloon car, honoured, extolled, in complete enjoyment of a hard-earned position after a lifetime of work ; while Prince William, having quite insufficiently breakfasted, with tired legs and empty stomach, walked to Cassel, and entered Cassel in the true manner of a travelling student. And this moral was fully exemplified in word and deed. So as not to be with the Emperor in Cassel, we wandered about in the surrounding country, obtaining with difficulty a cup of coffee in some pleasure grounds, wherein we blissfully soaked a pocketed crust of bread, in a yeoman's enclosure ; and finally moved on to our Furstenhaus in Königstrasse, where the porter, in gala array, was only with difficulty persuaded that we represented the expected company.

' At Cassel he (William) was quite the future Emperor. This overbearingness would never have set in if he had been brought up in the good old fashion with a few companions,' writes Corti.

' At Cassel the Crown Princess (on her visits) had a *culte* for Prince William. She could not leave him alone,' says M. Ayme, the French tutor to the Princes.

' You have no conception of what an abyss I have looked into ! ' was Hinzpeter's comment to a friend on the Cassel days. He complained that Prince William could never learn the first duty of a ruler—' hard work.'

An English journalist visiting Cassel talks enthusiastically

of the two Princes in their simple suits sitting attentively on the classroom benches. We hear of the Hohenzollern boys smoking cigars with superior complacency as they march beside the class professor at the head of a crocodile through the town streets. Daily, Prince William stokes up the classroom stove—his allotted task—for Dr. Auth, the bibulous and warmth-loving mathematics master, who is well pleased to be patronized by the princely stoker.

Director Vogt, convinced of the high ability of Prince William, detects the pupil's lack of application. He will only be willing to write 'Satisfactory' on the final report.

If William's classmates had recovered from the shock of finding the Hohenzollerns among them, then the heir to the Imperial Throne might have enjoyed his stay at Cassel less, but he would not have emerged with such a halo of serene priggishness. But in whatever class the Princes found themselves as they passed through Cassel, instinctive Teutonic deference made their classmates receive them as leaders. Released from the unsympathetic bonds which had held him all his life, William became the perfect pharisee. He found it easy to preside over his own literary society. His pronouncements and convictions were discussed with reverent respect. When Prince William said that 'if Horace were transplanted to the present day every respectable person would be ashamed of going about with him and would certainly never think of asking him to dinner,' then the reputation of that great poet fell very low at Cassel. There were always disciples to applaud his erudite opinions or to read his plays and other compositions.

Corti, in his opinion of the effect upon William of the Cassel days, undoubtedly came near the truth. William grew up no better for the Cassel episode. Hohenzollern Liberalism did not blossom at Cassel. Even Hinzpeter's cherished 'Dinners of Reconciliation,' to which he hopefully invited citizens of every social condition to sit at table with the Princes, were a waste of time. The Imperial pupils were not in a frame of mind to benefit from such feasts, and, in any case, these were spoiled by the high-born

arrogance of Major-General von Gottberg, Prince William's military tutor. Hinzpeter and the tutor, with their silent loathing and open battles, provided an unhappy circumstance of the ménage which drew the boys rather to the soldier than to the everlastingly preaching pedant, who roused them for special lessons at 5 a.m. in summer and 6 a.m. in winter, who dragged them off for a 'walk of discussion' after the afternoon work, and provided further study for them until bed-time.

In winter they lived in the Furstenhaus, next door to the gymnasium, and the steps built over the garden wall into the gymnasium garden to speed the passage of the Hohenzollerns to their studies served admirably to establish their immaculate status among their schoolmates. In summer they moved out to the cool of the château of Wilhelmshöhe, standing above the beautiful Fulda valley. Only a few years before Napoleon III had lived as a prisoner in the very rooms they occupied. The thought of the glorious victories which had brought about that event certainly did not stimulate any Liberal sentiments in William. It stirred his interest in Bismarck—the man who had made such things possible—as yet, a giant figure striding in the distance.

M. Ayme's testimony on the Crown Princess's attitude toward her eldest son during the Cassel days is revealing. Her patronizing persistence may have reached a honeyed pitch but contrast with the sterner years in the past cannot have been absent from the sharp mind of the son. In but a few years now the widowed mother was to receive with vicious indignation an ungrateful son's reward for fifteen years of excessive care.

The French tutor has left on record a conversational encounter he experienced with Prince William at this time. Ayme, struck by his pupil's nimble instability of mind, his assertive arrogance, his unfairness in argument, his wanton change-over in opinion to save face, especially noted the words which passed between them. This is of interest here, because the words used by Prince William in this losing argument are exactly those which his mother might have been

expected to use in the same circumstances. The vacillating mentality of the mother, her brilliant, scornful, obstinately unassailable attitude, the intellect without foundations, betray themselves in her son.

Prince William opened the conversation with an amazing and heartless display of tactlessness. He could not have touched on a more painful subject to the proud Frenchman. He began to talk about the French war indemnity to Germany.

"You could have paid from ten to fifteen milliards!" he announced. Then he grinned mischievously. "Well, next time!"

"Next time," said the French tutor quietly, "it will not be we who shall have to pay."

A startled pause.

"So much the worse for you, for you'll never squeeze such a sum out of us!" snapped the Prince angrily.

That made the Frenchman angry, too. He said that if Germany was ready to take all she had taken, she should be prepared in case of defeat to surrender with good grace an equal amount. Otherwise, he suggested sarcastically, Germany would be like the winning gambler who rises from the table the instant he begins to lose to those from whom he had won money.

Prince William's face grew black with fury. His voice grew shrill.

"You have put a detestable interpretation on my little joke," he exclaimed. "I never thought your nation capable of plundering Germany in war. Such a war would be nothing but a colossal robbery. The whole thing is contrary to my ideas. Of course, these conflicts are really brought about by the intrigues of ambitious ministers, who will do anything to stay in power. They ought to be obliged to fight it out personally. For the rest, I shall take care never to jest with you again on this subject."

For several days after this sad exhibition Prince William assumed an attitude of affected pleasantry toward Ayme which made the tutor feel he was a ruffled cat being soothed.

In just such a way was the Crown Princess likely to treat Bismarck after one of their many clashes.

So much for the fortunes away from home of the harassed, love-starved and over-crammed neurotic whom the Crown Princess has tried to mould with her swift, masterful hands just as with instinctive brilliance and unhesitating chisel she chips the blocks of stone in her studio. The human being she has modelled, who now stands at the threshold of manhood, is very like herself.

On January 25th, 1877, William and Henry sat in the hall of Cassel Gymnasium to hear the result of their Abiturienten Examen. Prince William came tenth on the list. Hinzpeter's work was done. It only remained for him to journey to Berlin with his pupils and bid farewell to the Crown Princess.

Two days later, in Berlin, William, pale and triumphant, in white uniform and brazen eagle helm, stands on a small platform in the scarlet and gold Rittersalle. It is his eighteenth birthday. He is of age. The flashing crystal chandeliers reflect the blaze of uniforms and heraldic tabards. About the shoulders of the crippled Prince the old Emperor has placed the mantle of the Order of the Knights of the Black Eagle. Below him stand his mother and the family. The new Knight gazes down at his mantled comrades as he swears to 'maintain the honour of the Royal House and guard the Royal privileges.'

That had been the second stirring moment of the day for William. At home, in the morning, a less pretentious ceremony in the drawing-room had thrilled him even more. Lord Odo Russell, the British Ambassador, had arrived to present him with the insignia of the Garter on behalf of Queen Victoria. Why was Prince William awarded by his grandmother the Order of the Garter, an honour which went usually only to crowned heads? It was because William himself had suggested that the Order of the Bath would not seem sufficiently honourable to the people of Germany. His grandmother had been impressed. But what did the German people say in actuality—at least, those who mattered? That the Queen of England had made this

concession to her grandson by arrangement with her daughter. They saw in the award a subtle kind of bribery to dazzle the Crown Prince and bring him under English influence.

William left home for six-months' military service with the Guards and then undertook a two-year course in Jurisprudence at Bonn University. The outside influences were now coming to bear on an aggravated and resentful young mind which was well prepared to give these a warm reception.

XVII

1878 and 1879 brought two great griefs to the Crown Princess, and, as a result, her bitter loneliness became the greater. Her sister Alice died of diphtheria at Darmstadt in the winter of 1878, and in the following spring, ten-year-old Waldemar, the cherished successor of Sigismund, died slowly of hæmophilia before the eyes of his distracted parents. To the Crown Prince and Princess family life and family interests had come to mean more than to many Royalties of their time because, in the eyes of the Emperor, they were suspect, and therefore no kind of real responsibility in State affairs normally devolved upon them. Home life had become their solace from humiliation and torn feelings; indeed, in the opinions of many they sought in domestic joys a panacea for their impatience that the octogenarian Emperor so obstinately preferred his Throne to his grave. The centre of this home life had been Waldemar—one of those imp-like small boys, an *enfant terrible*, yet with a nature so winning and serene and with an intelligence so clear that even the victims of his wit spoke of him with affectionate delight.

In his son Waldemar the Crown Prince was able to admire certain positive qualities of character which he knew were lacking in William and which, in fact, were also lacking in himself. When the father lay upon his own deathbed, not many years later, he thought of the dead Waldemar. He asked to be laid beside his ten-year-old son.

Waldemar seems to have been much more English in

temperament than the older boys, which is not surprising in view of the doting attitude of the Anglicized father and mother and, doubtless, the excess of tenderness and licence given to this younger son who could never do wrong awoke some envy in William. It is likely enough that this played its part in turning William secretly against his mother and in producing that anti-English complex which shortly emerged from the seething cauldron of his brain, amazing everybody by its ferocious zest.

1878 and 1879 brought also two happy events for the Crown Princess. In 1878 Princess Charlotte married Bernhard of Saxe-Meiningen and in 1879 Charlotte gave birth to a son, thereby making her mother a grandmother at thirty-nine and Queen Victoria, at sixty, a delighted great-grandmother.

Those were the years when the Near Eastern Question was paramount and Turkey was 'the Sick Man of Europe.' The Russian ambitions over Constantinople, the Turkish atrocities, revolts in the Balkans, filled the Continent with fear of a great war. Bismarck's policy was to side with the Tsar. England, determined that Russia must not get Constantinople, used all her diplomacy to extricate the irresponsible Sultan from the dangers threatening his ramshackle domains. The mind of the Crown Princess was much occupied with these happenings, which were none of her concern. Who can blame Bismarck for regarding the Crown Princess with growing apprehension? Her letters to the Queen show that, if she was not actively intriguing against Germany, she was at all events thinking solely in terms of *England*, not in terms of *Germany*. She was advising her mother to take actions which she believed would redound to the glory of England. How these might be regarded in Germany she did not care. Having ceased to scold and admonish her eldest son, she was now apparently determined to scold the British Foreign Office and her mother's statesmen for their decadence and lack of initiative.

Of all the remarkable and unasked-for advice that Vicky gave her mother, nothing beats her suggestion after the

Congress of London in 1880 that the British Fleet should seize the Dardanelles and Constantinople, that Queen Victoria should remove the Sultan to Cyprus or some other pleasant retreat, and that the Duke of Connaught or, perhaps, Prince Leopold, should become King of a vassal Turkey. Wild ideas of this kind, emanating from the Crown Prince's Household, reached the ears of Bismarck. Bismarck at this time had his eye on Count von Seckendorff whom he believed was aider and abettor of the Crown Princess. Seckendorff had been her Chamberlain for a number of years. A great connoisseur of art, he used to travel with the Crown Prince and Princess on their frequent journeys in Italy to study painting in the Italian galleries, and he had become close friend and confidant of the Crown Princess.

As a result of this, in 1882 the Crown Prince received an intimation from the Emperor that General Count Radolinsky was attached for duty to his Household. Small, dapper, bearded, Radolinsky, with his shifty wolfish eyes and his exaggerated hatred of Seckendorff, was the perfect musical comedy conspirator. To the end the Crown Princess alternately confided in and scolded Radolinsky, whom she took to be a troublesome and officious but sincere friend of the family. Radolinsky, instructed by Bismarck to entrench himself firmly in the Kronprinzen Household, to spy upon the Crown Princess and Seckendorff, and, if possible, to contrive the dismissal of the incorruptible Chamberlain, plunged into a childish and fantastic lying campaign against Seckendorff. Five years later Radolinsky—still in the Kronprinzen Household—was still lying hopefully about his immovable colleague, coolly insulting him across the dinner table, whispering furtive slanders into the ear of the Crown Princess and gnashing his teeth in his bedroom as he recorded in his diary yet another failure to oust Seckendorff.

Radolinsky visited England with the Crown Prince and Princess and Seckendorff and startled Queen Victoria in privately sought audience by suggesting that she should write to the Emperor requesting him to remove Seckendorff from her daughter's suite, as a pernicious and untrustworthy

person of evil reputation who was doing the Crown Princess great harm. Much perturbed, the Queen made inquiries about Seckendorff. She could learn nothing and could not even find that he had any enemies except Radolinsky!

Even this outrage on the part of Radolinsky, when it was told to the Crown Princess, only made her chide the too-faithful Radolinsky, explaining to him the sterling virtues of Seckendorff in hopes of patching up the mysterious antagonism between her two courtiers, which she constantly feared would break out into blows in public. Nothing but the unassailable obstinacy of her own decision that Radolinsky was her true henchman could have blinded her to the truth about this man; but, on this notable occasion, she was perfectly content as soon as Radolinsky had murmured his deep penitence for an indiscretion indulged in through overzealousness for her reputation and her letters show that she was almost sorry for the scoundrelly spy as he slunk away in mock humiliation. During the troublous period which was setting in for the Crown Prince and Princess, Radolinsky, the burlesque agent of Bismarck, if he achieved little for his master, yet contrived to deepen the unrestfulness in a sore and unhappy household.

Lady Ponsonby, while staying with the Crown Princess, wrote a letter to her husband in England at the time that Radolinsky first appeared upon the scene, and this contemporary picture of the state of affairs in the home of the Crown Princess vividly portrays the unhealthy atmosphere that prevailed.

'I don't think the Queen realizes what an extraordinary state of things exists in Germany in the way of espionage and intrigue,' says the writer. 'They, the Foreign Office, which means Bismarck, wanted to put a man of their own about the Crown Princess so as more effectually to control the Crown Prince when he became Emperor. Seckendorff refused to play the spy. They began by dismissing his brother, after twenty years' service, from the Foreign Office without any reason being given. Then they appointed Radolinsky (Court Marshal to the Crown Prince) with orders

to get rid of Seckendorff. Radolinsky furthered, or appeared to further, the Crown Princess's views about Bulgaria, and ingratiated himself into her good graces, and then began the undermining of Seckendorff. I think Seckendorff is to blame for his dictatorial manner, and she may have made him, as is the wont of the family, too much "the indispensable one," but I feel convinced on the whole he is being got rid of under false pretences, for Radolinsky's manner of defending the Crown Princess simply consists in spreading reports and trying to detach her family from her.'

William returned from Bonn in 1879 and once more came to live with his parents. His mother soon realized that a change had come over him. In the day-time he served as an officer with the Potsdam garrison; in the evenings he was argumentative, rude, and sulky. With astonishment the mother found herself entangled in long and indignant wrangles with her son. He was quoting opinions which she was sure were not his own, but those of Guards subalterns and young junkers of the Corps Borussia at Bonn. Shocked and unhappy, she found that he was scoffing at German Liberalism. If she mentioned England, he looked as if he would burst with fury, yet he was always ready to talk happily himself about Grandmama and talk of an English visit aroused enthusiasm in him.

Anglophobia was swiftly growing in William. Strange paradox! The thought of his English grandmother stirred William to the core, the possibility of an English visit fascinated him; yet soon Herbert Bismarck is remarking: "Prince William can never hear enough against England ... if his mother comes to the throne it is all up with Germany anyhow." The difference between mother and son is becoming obvious to outsiders. Field-Marshal von Waldersee, appointed military adviser to Prince William upon his leaving Bonn, also notes 'a strong prepossession against England' in the young man who was beginning to give him his confidence very freely. Reich Minister Lucius looks below the surface; 'a great unconscious attraction for England,' he comments shrewdly.

Mother and son have not yet taken the field in open warfare, but the mother is saying things which disgust the son and the son is saying things which disgust the mother. The atmosphere is charged at New Palace and at Berlin. The anti-English attitude of the son drives the mother to be openly anti-German. "If your father should die before I do, I shall leave at once," she bursts out one day. "I will not stay in a country where I have had nothing but hatred—not one spark of affection." She will return to England where everything is perfect! She has insulted the German race! William, in a cold fury, leaves the room. The Crown Prince, too, is aggravated by the sudden arrogance of William and by his insolence to his mother. It hurts him for he knows how much it makes her suffer.

The eighties have hardly turned when William is telling Waldersee that his mother 'consciously worked for England as against Prussian and German interests.' There are many watchers of the Kronprinzen Household. They are prejudiced and their words are strong, but, at least, they demonstrate an attitude toward the Crown Princess which was gaining more and more adherents in Prussia. Eulenberg, the bosom friend of William, formed his opinion of the Crown Princess from the words which dropped from her son's lips. Eulenberg saw fit to talk of the Crown Princess as 'a combination of remarkable intelligence and Coburg cunning, with a fine education and iron will, together with covetousness and a lack of Christian faith.' Field-Marshal von Waldersee soon thought himself in a position to sum up the whole situation. 'The Crown Prince, one of the keenest observers at Court, is naturally disappointed at having to wait so long for the throne,' he decides. 'Ten years—nay, fifteen years ago—he thought it unfair of Providence to let his father live so long. Influenced by his ambitious consort, he made many plans for the future, which were inspired by Liberal ideas. The Chancellor, whom the Crown Princess cannot, and the Crown Prince therefore must not, endure, gains in prestige daily. In this way the Crown Prince's position is made very difficult. The intellectual ambition

of the Crown Princess has proved a great misfortune. She has turned a simple-minded, gallant, honourable Prince into a weak-minded man devoid of self-reliance, no longer open-hearted, no longer Prussian in his ideas. Even of his steadfast faith she has robbed him. His grown-up children have no illusions about the true state of affairs. The father's weakness will be the measure of the son's self-will. If the Emperor lives much longer, the Crown Prince will go to pieces altogether.'

Here are two men, mutually antagonistic since both are rivals for the favours of Prince William, who have both arrived at the conclusion that the Crown Princess was a viciously selfish and ambitious woman. It is striking, too, how one accuses the Crown Princess of 'lack of Christian faith,' and the other decides that she has robbed her husband of 'his steadfast faith.' The Crown Princess had only her own indiscreet conduct to thank for the fact that two such men with no personal reasons for disliking her should be ready to judge her in such a manner. When Eulenberg and Waldersee talk in this vein it is not to be wondered at that her real enemies found ample reason to justify their hatred and suspicion.

XVIII

At one point in 1880 relations between mother and son improved somewhat. One day in the summer William, after a few days' absence, announced that he had become engaged to Augusta Victoria, the daughter of their old friend, Duke Frederick of Schleswig-Holstein. William had first met 'Dhona' in 1868 when staying with his parents at Reinhardtbrunn. Duke Frederick used to come over from Gotha, bringing his little, fair-haired daughter. 'Dhona' was a born listener and hero-worshipper. As a child she never invented games. She only took part in them. Sweet-natured, with big, wondering, blue eyes, she had acted like a tonic on William in those lean, unappreciative days of 1868. The cripple never forgot the refreshment of 'Dhona's'

admiration. She was even more completely suited to please William in 1880 than she had been eleven years before, for now he was beginning to play a gallant part on the national stage. No one would watch him with such eager understanding as would ' Dhona.'

At first the parents received the news of the engagement with flabbergasted annoyance. It was a defiance. No Hohenzollern engaged himself in this clandestine manner. Probably William's secretiveness was at bottom caused by an urge to defy his mother, since there was no reason for it, and the bride was entirely eligible, but the bickering which was on the verge of breaking out died away as father and mother fully realized their delight that their eldest son had chosen to marry the daughter of their misused friend, whose lost cause they had once sponsored so ardently. That Duke Frederick's daughter would now be Empress of Germany one day would be some compensation for his great disappointment over Schleswig-Holstein, over which affair they always felt that they had let him down. The Crown Princess was well acquainted with ' Dhona.' Realizing that she was losing her hold over William, it is not improbable that in her heart she also began to welcome the marriage with the hope that she would be able to work on William through the easily-influenced ' Dhona.' But if that was so she was mistaken. William was marrying ' Dhona ' to talk to her, not to listen to her.

The Crown Princess at once reported the engagement to her mother. Evidently she was genuinely happy about ' Dhona,' for she said, rather pathetically, that ' her smile, her manner, and her expression must disarm even the bristly, thorny people of Berlin with their sharp tongues, their cutting sarcasm about everybody and everything.'

So Queen Victoria forthwith summoned ' Dhona ' to Windsor. The bride-to-be dutifully departed for England to interview her fiancé's grandmother. The Queen agreed that she was ' gentle and amiable and sweet,' but was not much impressed by her understanding. William's mother in reply concurred with this opinion, but thought that as

William was so dull and unappreciative and lacking in initiative, 'Dhona' would make him a very comfortable wife. Nothing could shake this astonishing obsession of the Crown Princess that her son was a dullard. One of the reasons that have been put forward to account for this lack of insight is plausible up to a point, but, even so, it does not flatter his mother. It is that William acquired the habit of shutting up like a clam whenever his mother wanted him to agree to anything. She had only to admire a painting to make it as mud in her son's eyes. And as she was not in the habit of thinking overmuch, she never noticed that this was not his real attitude toward life.

The wedding was celebrated in the following February amid scenes of courtly magnificence, and when 'Dhona' made her official entry into Berlin in the gold State coach the Crown Princess, who sat beside her, had a more radiant look in her face than had been seen for years. She looked almost like the bride who had come to Prussia in the late fifties. But the armed truce between mother and son was coming to an end. On the night before the wedding Vicky told her mother that she had felt so sad that William was sleeping at home for the last time that she had confessed her thoughts to him. He had smiled and said that one place was as good as another for sleeping in, so far as he was concerned. But, despite her sadness, in a few months she was becoming more incensed with William than ever before.

At twelve o'clock on the night of the wedding they danced the dreamy Fackeltanz—that stately traditional nuptial dance of the Court—beneath the flashing chandeliers of the Weisse Salle. It was after Eulenberg, Master of the Ceremonies, with effeminate grace, had conducted in with his wand the creeping, mincing torch procession of ministers, and the bride and bridegroom had followed them in the weird rhythmical encirclement of the scarlet hall before the Emperor and Empress, that Bismarck turned to his neighbour who had made an appraising remark about the bride. The giant Chancellor gazed with shrewd eyes at the beautiful, insipid face of 'Dhona.'

"You think she will make Prince William a good wife and a good future Consort," he rejoined. "I am inclined to think she may, because she has not got the brains to talk much. At all events, that child will never be to her husband what the daughter of the Queen of England has been to the Crown Prince. If Prince William had fallen in love with a woman of strong character and that woman had come under bad influences, it would have been calamitous for Germany. She could have made him do anything. It would be worse for my successor than it has been for me with the Crown Prince and Princess."

The real outburst between William and his parents arrived in 1884. The cause of it was the Battenberg affair. In 1883 Princess Victoria became engaged to Prince Alexander of Battenberg, the ruler of Bulgaria. Prince Alexander was a member of the Hessian Royal Family and, as a nephew-in-law of Princess Alice of Hesse, was not only known to but was approved as a very outstanding young man by Queen Victoria. Queen Victoria thought the match very suitable when her delighted daughter sent her news of it. If William was her favourite grandson Victoria was her favourite granddaughter. She debated coming to Germany for the wedding.

But Queen Victoria did not, as Count Bismarck believed, arrange the match in the first place as a masterly piece of foreign policy. Of course, she was not blind to this side of the affair and was doubtless more enthusiastic about it on this account, once the engagement was a fact, than was prudent in view of the fierce antagonism to the Bulgarian match which she must have known was rising in Berlin circles.

The Crown Princess certainly appreciated that, if the Bulgarian match could be brought about, the result in the long run would be to bring Germany and Great Britain closer together, and on that account and because she was naturally jealous for the happiness of Victoria, she became a tiger when the Chancellor took the field against the projected marriage.

The causes underlying the matter were simple enough. Bismarck, as champion of German interests, had a very good case. Russia had wished to make Bulgaria a puppet state. With this aim in view, Tsar Alexander II in 1879 used his influence to have Prince Alexander of Battenberg elected to the Throne of Bulgaria.

From that point things went wrong. The young German Prince, instead of starting a movement among his Bulgarian subjects of 'Bulgaria for the Russians,' started instead one of 'Bulgaria for the Bulgarians.' Russia gnashed her teeth and did her best to flood Bulgaria with Russian propaganda, Russian officials, Russian experts of various descriptions, and Russian agents. It was very difficult for Prince Alexander to resist this treatment from his gigantic neighbour, but he behaved with great determination. When Tsar Alexander III succeeded his father in 1881 the Russo-Bulgarian tussle intensified. The height of bitterness had been reached when Prince Alexander became engaged to Princess Victoria. Bulgaria was full of plots and Russian intrigue and it looked as if at any moment the Tsar might arise and drive Prince Alexander off the Throne.

Bismarck, above all else, feared the encirclement of Germany. Germany already had France to the west, an enemy yearning for revenge and recovering herself with terrifying speed. To the south she had to reckon with a disgruntled Austria who might be harbouring secret vengeance.

If Germany befriended Bulgaria by marrying a Hohenzollern Princess to Russia's sworn enemy, the Bulgarian ruler, then the carefully fostered friendship with Russia would be instantly at an end, and any day Germany might be faced with a war on three fronts. Bismarck, convinced that England planned to draw Germany out of the Russian and into the English orbit, solely in order to forward the selfish interests of the British Empire, and recognizing that in self-defence Germany must, indeed, line up with England if she lost the Russian friendship, put the worst possible construction on the eagerness of the Crown Princess and her

mother for the Bulgarian marriage. Seeing the Crown Princess still so militantly in favour of the match when the reasons against it were so perfectly obvious, he was confirmed in his belief that the Crown Princess was *not* a patriotic German. This Royal Princess of Germany put English interests first.

Moritz Busch, the Chancellor's right-hand man, made an illuminating entry in his diary about these events. First he speaks in a convinced manner of 'the Battenberger' being 'tied to' English policy. Then he goes on, 'he made the acquaintance of the Queen of England during his European tour. The thought of a marriage was possibly suggested by the grandmother in London, who wished to see the position of her servant secured against Russia by an alliance with our Court. The scheme leaked out and came to the ears of the Chief (Bismarck). Of course, he was anything but pleased and did not conceal his objections from the Emperor, but on the contrary expressed them both verbally and in a statement which I had to prepare. It would show us in a bad light at St. Petersburg. The Emperor recognized this and issued his veto, which must have been very unpleasant for the Crown Princess.'

To speak of the 'veto' of the Emperor is, strictly, an exaggeration. It might have been better if he had issued a categorical veto in the first place, instead of allowing the affair to develop into a storm of quarrels and intrigues lasting for several years. His words in a letter to Bismarck in 1885 show the attitude he adopted. 'I may mention to you at the same time that I consider the moment has now come to lay before my son the views with which it was all along intended to acquaint him as to the utter inexpediency of the marriage in question.' It can easily be imagined that when Fritz transmitted to his wife sentiments of this description they appeared even less decisive and gave hope that resistance might turn out to be successful.

Even when Prince Alexander was kidnapped by Russians and dragged out of his kingdom, with the result that he shortly afterwards abdicated in desperation, Bismarck still

saw great danger in befriending this bitter enemy of Russia and was determined that the Hohenzollerns must not aggravate the Tsar by welcoming him into the fold.

Bismarck was not mincing his words. He accosted 'Sandro,' the worried suitor, who, for the loss of his kingdom, was hoping at least to solace himself with the woman of his heart. "The marriage is impossible," growled the Chancellor. "So long as I am in office, it will not take place."

That meant that Bismarck was bringing to bear on the Emperor his famous *threat to resign*. This unfailing measure knocked all the jauntiness out of the 'old Master'; he was no longer seen strutting briskly about with his immaculate silk hat at an angle; he sat crumpled in his study, a peevish, half-tearful old warrior, and the Empress drooped in her bath-chair and spat venom at her ladies.

At one point in the Battenberg crisis the news circulated that Queen Victoria would shortly arrive in Berlin in an effort to arrange the affair amicably—of course, to the advantage of 'Sandro' and his fiancée. Bismarck's comment on the threatened invasion from Windsor achieved a sardonic richness which even he never surpassed.

"In family matters," he remarked, "she (Queen Victoria) is not accustomed to contradiction and would immediately bring the parson in her travelling bag and the bridegroom in her trunk and the marriage would come off at once. They are in a mighty hurry over there in London!"

William was hotly against the Battenberg marriage, because the wily Chancellor had now seen that the time was ripe to adopt the future heir. He had not yet taken him into the Foreign Office—his famous 'workshop'—but he was weaning him away from the pernicious English influence. After all, Bismarck wished his son Count Herbert to succeed him in the Chancellorship and he meant to leave him a triumphant legacy, not an Anglicized muck-heap. Presently the Chancellor was to receive the openly expressed approval of the aged Emperor in his campaign to draw the heir away from his parents. It seems amazing, in view of the unpredictable tragedy soon to be enacted,

that an unaccountable impression was getting round that the reign of the Crown Prince was going to be a brief, negligible phase, if it ever took place at all, and that all hopes for the future must rest on Prince William. Yet the Crown Prince was only in his fifties, a robust man exuding health, and the Emperor had come to his nineties. Even the Crown Prince seems to have been haunted by this strange idea for he was constantly using expressions that suggested he thought he would soon be in the grave.

"If the Crown Prince were suddenly to become Emperor there would be nothing for it but to transfer the Prince (William) to a distant garrison," Waldersee was going about saying to his friends in 1885. As a matter of fact, many people who had heard of or actually witnessed the undignified clashes taking place between the Crown Princess and Prince William were suggesting that for the honour of the Family he would be sent away from Potsdam at any moment.

The father was also beginning publicly to slight his son. Words never broke out between them, but they avoided finding one another alone in the same room. At the manœuvres William was attached to his father's staff. In the headquarters' tent, William was completely ignored by the Crown Prince. Prince Henry, on the other hand—now a naval officer and present only as an observer—was continually in conversation with his father. The others in the tent were made to feel quite uncomfortable on Prince William's account. If any instructions had to be given to the Prince they were transmitted through somebody else. So far as possible, work was found for him which kept him at some miles from headquarters.

William told Waldersee that he believed his mother alone was responsible for the objection his father seemed to be taking to him. The Crown Princess went to England and William had several friendly conversations with his father. His mother was due to return. "Now for a change of wind!" exclaimed William, and the wind certainly did change. The Guards gave a dinner to celebrate a victory. The Crown Prince and Prince William attended. After dinner the Crown

Prince rose to speak. Soon, everybody became aware that the speech was deliberately aimed at Prince William. They sat with their eyes on the table in painful amazement as the Crown Prince revealed himself more and more clearly. Waldersee was among the listeners. 'He represented his son,' he says, 'to all the officers and guests as an immature and injudicious person. The Prince controlled himself but was infuriated. The universal opinion is that he behaved very well, and the Crown Prince incredibly badly. The parents are now intent on getting up a scandal and provoking an open rupture.'

Corti, the Italian Ambassador, recalls an occasion when the Crown Princess turned to an Austrian nobleman who was a guest at Court and said: "You can scarcely imagine how I admire your handsome, intelligent, and graceful Crown Prince when I see him beside my uncouth and lumpish son William!"

That story travelled quickly to Vienna and became a topic for conversation in every Court of Europe. The Crown Princess was universally condemned, both as an unnatural mother and as an incredibly ill-bred Royal Princess.

Yet at that very time she was writing to her mother letters about William which do not betray that flaming hatred that people were saying she felt for him, but rather intense irritation and hurt feelings and disappointment.

Many believe that at this point Prince William was genuinely trying to become on friendly terms with his parents. But his mother had lost control of herself and she carried his father with her. Whatever she felt in her heart, her tongue kept uttering wild things. It pushed William irredeemably into the enemies' camp.

Bismarck decided that the time had come to bring Prince William into the Foreign Office as his pupil. The old Emperor at once agreed with the Chancellor's proposal. By that means, better than any other, said the Emperor, 'his young soul may be guarded against errors!' Thus decisively, at last, did the Emperor bring himself to condemn the ideals of his son and daughter-in-law.

Perhaps the Crown Prince, on reading the notification from the Chancellor that his eldest son was about to take up a post at the Foreign Office, understood that the real intention of Bismarck was to humiliate him publicly by entrusting William with duties which should fall to himself. His reply was vicious.

'In view of the immaturity as well as the inexperience of my eldest son,' he wrote, 'together with his tendency toward overbearingness and self-conceit, I cannot but frankly regard it as dangerous to allow him at present to take any part in foreign affairs.'

Almost certainly the Crown Princess had a hand in composing this piece of unasked-for advice to the Chancellor; for at the same time she was writing to Queen Victoria, 'William is as blind and green, wrong-headed, and violent in politics as can be.'

Bismarck sent Prince William to Russia to attend the coming-of-age celebrations of the Tsarevitch—that future despot whom he was one day to hail optimistically as 'Admiral of the Pacific,' while he reserved for himself the title of 'Admiral of the Atlantic'! William took the opportunity to assure Tsar Alexander in confidence that Queen Victoria, his uncle Bertie, and his mother were plotting to bring Germany into alliance with England against Russia. However, he told the startled Tsar it was unnecessary to worry unduly, for they would have to reckon with Prince William. The Tsar was not entirely unimpressed with this dynamic young man, even though he did say afterwards: "That boy is a fool!"

The Emperors of Germany and Austria had a State meeting of reconciliation in circumstances of great pomp at Gastein. It was clearly the right of the Crown Prince to be summoned to attend upon his father on this occasion; but Bismarck had decided otherwise. With inexpressible chagrin the Crown Prince was informed that Prince William had been ordered to attend upon the Emperor. The whole of Germany was set talking.

Then William was sent back to Russia as the official

representative of Germany at the great Review at Brest-Litovsk. William's superficial knowledge of military matters was extensive and his military bearing was impressive. People who had known him as a boy were wont to say "I can't believe it!" when they saw this dashing cavalry man in the saddle. It was a triumph for the Crown Princess and Hinzpeter, but at what a price! Russian officers exclaimed: "This young Prince has the making of a very great soldier." But they were watching only the outward man.

A warm reception awaited William when he reached Berlin. He had brought Russia and Germany closer together. Only his parents held back. "They are jealous of him," remarked Waldersee and noted the fact in his diary.

In justice to the Crown Prince it must be admitted that he was right when he charged his son with overbearingness and self-conceit. William had already embarked on the custom of sending his bust as a birthday present to friends. The fact was brought home to Queen Victoria when she received not only a bust of her grandson, but also a photograph with 'I bide my Time' inscribed beneath it. But, secretly, 'Grandmama' was impressed. It looked as though William was going to develop into a bold personality whom she could really admire. She was not entirely in sympathy with Vicky over the troubles she was having with William. She asked William to Balmoral and presented him with a magnificent Highland costume in which John Brown helped him to array himself.

PART FIVE

DANCE OF DEATH

JUNE 21st, 1887 . . . the Jubilee Day of the Queen of England. The pageant of plumes and colour and steel wound through the packed streets of London. Advancing behind the carriage of Her Majesty on a high-stepping black charger at the head of the foreign princes came a tall Wagnerian figure. Sunlight flashed from his brazen helm with its brazen eaglet, it glistened in the gold of his spreading beard and lighted the white purity of his uniform. All eyes turned to this superb warrior, who seemed to have ridden out of the mists of Germanic myth. It was Crown Prince Frederick William—he who must soon be Emperor of Germany, husband of the Princess Royal. The roaring cheers for the Royal carriage with his mother-in-law and his wife were dying. He passed and these renewed in volume. People watched the back of the tall, white figure with awe-struck admiration and let the other foreigners sweep by. They told each other how strange and sad his face had looked. Some said the sight of the still, white horseman who gazed unflinchingly ahead was positively uncanny—as if he were a phantom from another world.

But none of those in the streets who saw the passing of Frederick William, none of those who watched him in Westminster Abbey as he bent almost double while the Queen embraced him and kissed his cheek in that spontaneous display of family affection before King Edward's Coronation Chair, none at the luncheon in the Supper Room at Buckingham Palace, or afterwards in the Blue Drawing Room, knew that the Prince was standing at the edge of his grave. The little hoarse whisper that spurted

from the mouth of this burly soldier, who only spoke when addressed, shocked and amazed those who heard it.

Late in 1886, on the Riviera, the Crown Prince caught a bad chill. He was left with a painful sore throat. By the following January the inflammation had vanished, but he was speaking with a peculiar hoarseness. March came. The family noticed that the hoarseness had increased. He complained of dryness and discomfort in the throat. Professor Gerhardt of Berlin was called. Gerhardt detected polypous thickening of the vocal cords. He came daily and endeavoured to remove the superfluous matter with red-hot wire and tweezers. It was a painful but simple operation. There was no cause for anxiety.

In the middle of April Gerhardt had laid aside his wire and tweezers and advised the Crown Prince to take the cure at Ems. The growth renewed itself as quickly as it was destroyed. Gerhardt believed that the salubrious climate at Ems and the cure might achieve what his instruments could not do.

In the middle of May the Crown Prince returned to Potsdam and Gerhardt came to examine the patient. His face was grave when he told his patient that there was nothing for it but to admit that Ems had done no good. The thickening had greatly grown since April. Gerhardt agreed with Dr. Wegner, personal physician to the Crown Prince, to call in von Bergmann, one of Berlin's leading surgeons. After several examinations of matter taken from the throat, Bergmann began to talk to his colleagues of cancer. It was his opinion that if the disease was cancer the growth had been discovered in such an early state that a very good chance existed of destroying it completely if the operation of laryngotomy was performed with as little delay as possible. They asked for the Crown Princess and told her of their suspicions of cancer. Bergmann assured her that the operation, though dangerous, offered the best chances. Nothing was said to the Crown Prince.

The three doctors further consulted together and decided to suggest the calling in of some eminent European specialist

in laryngology. Three foreign candidates were discussed, and Gerhardt, impressed by Wegner's description of the alleged skill of one of these, Dr. Morell Mackenzie of London, agreed that the Englishman ought to be summoned. This decision was given to the Crown Princess who agreed to send for Morell Mackenzie. Nothing was said to the Crown Prince, either about the suspected cancer forming in his throat or about the probability that he would have to undergo a grave operation at any moment. Three more eminent doctors now came on the scene—Schrader, von Lauer, and Professor Tobold, the Emperor's physician. The first two were certainly not prepared to *deny* that the growth was cancer; and Tobold believed it *was* cancer. Bergmann told the Princess that he was not prepared to operate until he had heard the opinion of Morell Mackenzie; but from the fact that the doctors arranged between themselves that the operation must take place at New Palace on April 21st—the day after Morell Mackenzie's arrival—and from Bergmann's expressed indignation and surprise when Morell Mackenzie scoffed at the necessity for an operation, there can be little doubt that they were convinced that the English specialist would only confirm their opinion. The Emperor was made fully aware of his son's state, and of the dangerous nature of the proposed operation. He gave his consent. Every preparation was made at New Palace. It only remained to tell the Crown Prince that it was essential that he must undergo the operation.

'It is so difficult to appear unconcerned when one's heart is so torn,' wrote Vicky to her mother. 'The idea of a knife touching his dear throat is terrible to me. I own I was more dead than alive with horror and distress when I heard this.'

She was, indeed, a prey to frantic terror and an inexpressible agony of realization that Fritz was going to leave her alone in this awful land, that this was the end of all their dreams. In her heart she felt even then that Fritz was doomed, as the tone of her letters clearly hints. But, for months after Morell Mackenzie had 'reprieved' the Crown Prince from the verdict of the German doctors, she was to

fight like a tiger to support the pathetic illusion of ultimate recovery and to protect the English specialist who persisted in encouraging her in this attitude. Thereby she brought down upon her head a vicious outburst of abuse, insult, and slander such as had never before descended upon a Royal Princess in any country.

What motive moved her to act as she did? An impression is pretty widely spread that Empress Frederick was little better than the murderess of her husband. That she refused to have him operated upon, when operation offered the only real hope, because she was ambitious to be Empress for at least a short time, and feared that operation might leave her a widow with her goal unachieved. That it was she who summoned Morell Mackenzie, contrary to advice, because she distrusted German doctors. That she worked in collusion with Mackenzie to keep away the German doctors and the emissaries of the Emperor, even when she knew that his diagnosis was wrong and suspected the English specialist of being a self-seeking charlatan. That her cruel, hard heart allowed her to watch the Englishman kill her husband by slow degrees.

There was only one real motive which drove Vicky through all those months of tragedy. It was the passionate, blind instinct of the loving wife to keep Fritz alive. Shrinking from the horror which she sensed lay ahead, she gripped with characteristic fierceness at the straw of hope which Mackenzie held out.

Tremendous controversy has raged over the part played by the Crown Princess and Dr. Morell Mackenzie at this point in German history; because it is probable that if Bergmann's proposed operation had saved the Crown Prince and he had come to the Throne in sound health the course of German, and therefore of world, history would have run in a different channel. Nobody was able to say whether Bergmann could or could not have destroyed the cancer by his operation in its early stage, but the German doctors—all men of powerful influence—were ready to hint as much, including Bergmann himself. All the blame for the faulty

diagnosis which resulted from the employment of Morell Mackenzie was laid by contemporaries on the Crown Princess and Emil Ludwig passed on their impression to posterity.

But, subsequently, not only has William II himself in his memoirs testified that his mother had nothing to do with the selection of Morell Mackenzie, but her daughter, Princess Victoria, and several others have made it plain that her only fault was her eagerness to believe in the Englishman because he told her what she wished to hear and her obstinacy in maintaining to the world that the Crown Prince was not suffering from cancer. Had she persuaded her husband to demand to undergo the hazards of a dangerous operation, when assured by Morell Mackenzie that this was unnecessary, she would have been a most unnatural wife. Her own letters demonstrate her joy at the news that the laryngotomy could be dispensed with. It is understandable how, from the moment she had that opinion from the lips of Morell Mackenzie, she became clay in the hands of this enigmatic man.

But the case of Dr. Morell Mackenzie is different. The Morell Mackenzie affair became one of the great riddles and, indeed, one of the great scandals of Europe, and whether or not he was a well-meaning but clumsy practitioner or an unscrupulous schemer bent on 'feathering his own nest,' as many believed, will never become plain. Was this brilliant specialist—for such he was reputed to be—acting with sincerity when he made a diagnosis which apparently showed the lack of most elementary knowledge and experience? Here are the facts, as noted at the time by the Crown Princess in her letters to Queen Victoria and corroborated by William II in his memoirs.

Morell Mackenzie arrived at New Palace on the evening of May 20th—the eve of the operation on the Crown Prince. He went straight to the patient and examined his throat. Then he left the room with the Crown Princess. As a result of what he said to her she wrote to the Queen that night, 'he says he cannot advise an operation before being quite sure that this growth in the throat is a malignant one!'

With the approval of the German doctors the operation was postponed, and Morell Mackenzie detached a fragment from the growth on the larynx and sent this to Professor Virchow for microscopic examination. Virchow reported that he saw no traces of malignant disease on the fragment, but advised that a larger piece should be given him before any decision was taken. Morell Mackenzie accordingly proceeded to remove a larger fragment in the presence of the other doctors. Gerhardt examined the larynx after the operation and subsequently informed his colleagues that Morell Mackenzie had damaged the undiseased right vocal cord. Possibly as a result of this discovery the suspicions of the Germans were raised, for shortly afterwards, according to Sir Frederick Ponsonby, when grave misgivings about the conduct of Morell Mackenzie arose, an accusation was put about—obviously emanating from the German doctors—that Morell Mackenzie had deliberately taken the second fragment from the healthy side of the larynx in order to ensure a favourable report from Virchow.

Virchow examined the second fragment. He gave his considered opinion that it bore no traces of a malignant growth. "It is a polypous or fibromatous swelling. I can destroy it without an operation. You are not suffering from cancer," said Morell Mackenzie. "If you will come to my clinic in England like any ordinary mortal it will be cured in six or eight weeks. At the end your voice will be so strong that you will be able to command an Army Corps at a Review!"

It had originally been intended to put the Crown Prince under an anæsthetic and to operate upon him without telling him what was to take place, but the Emperor had forbidden this. He had stipulated that the operation must be performed only with the full consent of his son. Who can blame the Crown Prince for withdrawing his consent to the operation upon hearing these words from Morell Mackenzie, and who can blame the Crown Princess for encouraging her husband with all her might to come to this decision? It was agreed, therefore, that after Queen Victoria's Jubilee the

Crown Prince would remain on in England and submit himself to Morell Mackenzie's treatment.

From the moment that the German doctors heard of this decision they protested. It was perhaps natural that they became more convinced than ever that the Crown Prince was suffering from cancer. Their antagonism to Morell Mackenzie at this stage cannot have been mere jealousy; for it was not until later that the Crown Princess, by her violent and insulting preference for the Englishman, gave them cause for this sentiment. As for the Crown Prince, his melancholy demeanour in the days following on the verdict of Morell Mackenzie seemed to show resignation rather than hope.

'It is a question whether the Englishman (Morell Mackenzie) really pronounced his diagnosis in good faith,' says William II. 'I am convinced that this was not the case. It is not only that he was a laryngological authority to whom a diagnosis so mistaken can hardly be credited, but the haste with which, without waiting for the result of his treatment, he was out not only after money, but also after the English aristocracy, tells against him, too. But the decisive proof is that, on the journey back to England after the death of my father, he admitted that the only reason for his not diagnosing the disease as cancer was that the poor Crown Prince should not be declared incapable of assuming government! When one considers that if the English doctor had not intervened, my father would in all probability have been saved, one will understand how it was that I took every opportunity of opposing this ostrich policy . . . my mother could not free herself from the Englishman's authority, even when the facts had become fully clear to everyone else. . . . Mackenzie could think of nothing better than to chase my father from country to country and from place to place.'

Some ten days after it had been decided to place the case in the hands of Mackenzie and to abandon the operation, the Crown Princess asked Gerhardt his frank opinion on what had been done.

"I regard the matter with increasing anxiety," came the reply. "Where Mr. Mackenzie removed a small portion it has grown again—the tumour is suppurating on the other side of the throat and the other vocal cord, which hitherto has remained healthy, is attacked—there is already a considerable amount of damage done. If Dr. Mackenzie cannot assist and cure it there is no chance of recovery save in the operation known as laryngotomy. It would have to be performed under far less favourable conditions than would have been the case fourteen days ago. Therefore my only hope is that Dr. Mackenzie may be right in his opinion, for we have nothing else to suggest."

"Of course, you can understand that this makes me utterly miserable," Vicky told her mother. "Thank God, Fritz does not guess, and this will not reach the ears of the public unless the doctors talk, which I have implored them not to do."

But talk was precisely what the doctors did do. Berlin buzzed with strange rumours and scandalous lies, all aimed against the Crown Princess. She was charged with plotting to abduct her helpless husband to England when at any moment the old Emperor might die. Then what would happen if the Crown Prince was too ill to return?

The Crown Princess had never been attacked like this. The truth could not be kept from Fritz. In a sense, he, too, was coming under the bombardment of abuse, for the hint was clear enough that he was allowing himself to be the mere puppet of his wife.

But the Crown Princess was determined that, come what might, there should be no turning back. They must go to England and Fritz must be entrusted to Morell Mackenzie.

Her true feelings are tragic. She confesses herself to the Queen. 'I cannot bring myself to believe that the German doctors are right! People torment me with questions—some say it would be my fault if anything happened to Fritz in England.'

The Berlin Press took up the affair. Soon all Europe was discussing the terrible happenings in Germany and the

extraordinary conduct of Queen Victoria's eldest daughter. So bad did things become that when they left for England they took with them three boxes filled with their most private papers. Queen Victoria was to be asked to take charge of these. They were frightened that these papers would be stolen from New Palace in their absence and used against them by their enemies.

As soon as the Jubilee ceremonies were ended the family—Vicky, Fritz, and their three daughters—were taken by Morell Mackenzie to Norwood. The air of the southern London heights did no good to the Crown Prince. Next the specialist advised them to go to the Isle of Wight, where the moist atmosphere was said to be healing to throat ailments. They lived at Norris Castle and saw a good deal of the Queen. The Isle of Wight was not beneficial to Fritz. They went to the Scottish Highlands. Morell Mackenzie had to admit that his patient was not improving.

September came. Mackenzie suggested that Toblach in Switzerland would be a healthy place for the Crown Prince. There he visited them. He found the high altitude affecting his patient's throat. They went to Venice. The lagoons were found to be extremely harmful. In October they were installed in a villa at Baveno on Lake Maggiore. It seemed to them that the beautiful atmosphere of the lake must exhilarate the patient. Before the month had reached its end it was perfectly obvious to all of them that a move was advisable. Then Mackenzie advised San Remo on the Riviera. This was the last refuge before the Ninety-Nine Days' reign, and here at Villa Zirio some strangely dramatic scenes were to be enacted.

In Berlin the storm of abuse against the Crown Princess was rising to a crescendo, as the Crown Prince was dragged to yet another foreign resort. Meanwhile, the old Emperor was having seizures and his mind was wandering. Everybody expected him to die at any moment. Friends wrote begging the Crown Princess to bring her husband back. To this she answered that she would fight 'tooth and nail' to keep him away from Germany until the cure was

completed! She was losing control of herself. The subtle Radolinsky—now in Berlin—seemed to take a fiendish delight in retailing to her in the guise of a confidant all the choicest titbits of the slanders against her. ‘Whenever anything is wrong, it does not matter *what* it be, it is put on my back,’ she complained. ‘The court and official world find me a very convenient scapegoat. Most of these amiable people are not worth knocking down, even if one had the power of delivering a few *coups de poing*. I am labelled “suspicious” and “dangerous” by the clique who are all-powerful now. I cannot help it. I cannot change my skin to please them, nor shall they tread me under foot, as they would like to some day. . . . After all, it is only *sometimes* that I boil over with annoyance.’

That the Crown Princess was giving vent to expressions of this kind reached the ears of the people who were abusing her. It made them more viciously inclined toward her than before. Hatred of the *Englanderin* and all she represented, which had first appeared in the open during the Franco-Prussian War, was now pushing out deep roots. From that time onwards until the Great War that hatred of England was instinctive in the men who ruled the destinies of Germany; for so firmly had the Crown Princess persuaded Germans that she was a piece of England that England became responsible for her transgressions. It remained only for her eldest son, when he reached the Throne, to spread distrust and envy of England to a wider German public and sooner or later a clash between the two peoples became inevitable.

They came to San Remo on November 5th. The Villa Zirio, surrounded with flowers, looked out from among its sloping olive groves across the white ribbon of the Monte Carlo road to the blue Mediterranean far below. Within the spacious, sun-bathed villa which, on that day of arrival, seemed to the new tenants to be pregnant with the spirit of peace and friendliness, an indescribable atmosphere of nightmare and restless dread had come to reign by December.

Count Seckendorff had been with the family all the time, a quiet and sympathetic sharer in their terrible trouble, but now Radolinsky arrived from Berlin with his private instructions from 'the Chief.' Remarking blandly that he had expected to find the Crown Prince already dead, softly retailing the most vicious Berlin gossip to the Crown Princess while mocking Seckendorff with snarling eyes, soothing his mistress with one breath and lacerating her heart with the next, the accepted faithful friend, he brought the first disturbing element into the new home.

The ground floor at the Villa was turned into a suite for the Crown Prince and Princess. Sophie, Margaret, and Victoria had their rooms upstairs. Sir Morell Mackenzie arrived on the day after they moved in. He had been knighted by Queen Victoria, at the request of her daughter, for his services to the Prussian Royal Family. No wonder the German doctors were ready to hate him now! The case, indeed, was about to enter a new and disgusting phase in which the cure of the Crown Prince was perhaps the least important factor. It had come to a great quarrel with the German doctors over medical honour, with the Hohenzollerns, including William, Henry, and Charlotte, the doctors, the Berlin Government, and the German people ranged on one side, and on the other side Morell Mackenzie, the Crown Princess and her helpless dying husband, who might at any moment be Emperor, backed supposedly by Queen Victoria and the Prince of Wales, the latter of whom, with the best intentions, but very ill-advisedly, came to stay at Villa Zirio.

As a matter of fact, Queen Victoria does not appear to have been by any means satisfied with the omnipotence of Morell Mackenzie. She let fall remarks which hinted that she believed he might be chiefly a self-seeker, and we find the daughter complaining that someone must have been telling tales to her mother. Not the least interesting aspect of the affair was that Morell Mackenzie, according to William II, had the means for persuading certain sections of the Berlin Press to sponsor him at the expense of the German

doctors, though how he achieved this is not explained. At all events, that this did happen was all the more unfortunate so far as Anglo-German relations were concerned, for it only added fuel to the fire of hatred which burned elsewhere.

There can be no doubt that whatever Morell Mackenzie had really thought about his patient's malady up to this time, he became frightened upon reaching Villa Zirio.

On the day after his arrival the Crown Prince asked him point blank if he thought the disease might be cancer.

"I'm sorry to say, sir," he replied "that it looks very much like it. It is impossible to be certain."

For a moment the Crown Prince gazed at the doctor. He covered his face with his hands and burst into bitter weeping. It was not the fear of death, nor was it that the words were unexpected. He was shaken by a bitterness that was in his very soul.

Vicky records the words of her stricken husband. 'To think that I should have such a horrid, disgusting illness,' he moaned, 'that I shall be an object of disgust to everyone, and a burden to all! I had so hoped to be of use to my country. Why is Heaven so cruel to me! What have I done to be thus condemned? What will become of you? I have nothing to leave you.'

The Englishman was no longer anxious to carry the sole responsibility. After his words with the Crown Prince, Morell Mackenzie left the room and sent a long telegraphic report to Berlin. Its reception caused a tremendous sensation, almost a panic. The city became full of rumours that the Crown Prince was dying. The Crown Princess was accused of keeping the truth from the nation. The German doctors received instant instructions from Bismarck, packed their bags, and descended in full force upon Villa Zirio, with several new colleagues among their number. It had become a State problem. The initiative could be left no longer with the Crown Princess. The affair presented infuriating difficulties, for you cannot easily abduct even your own Crown Prince from a foreign territory when an eminent

physician proclaims to the world that he is too sick to be moved.

Prince William, by his own account, went to the Emperor and begged permission to go to San Remo to find out the truth. In his youthful confidence he was able to persuade the old man and Bismarck that this was the only way to cut through the thick mist which hovered between Berlin and San Remo. Bismarck suggested that he should take with him Dr. Schmidt of Berlin and Professor Schrotter, the great Viennese throat specialist, and it was agreed that William upon arrival should order an examination by each doctor individually, that he should then summon a conference and request each in turn to state a considered opinion *which he would not be afraid to put on paper*. From this Prince William would draw up his own report and advise on what was best to be done.

Meanwhile, at Villa Zirio, renewed talk had started about the laryngotomy operation. Opinions were expressed that this offered the only remaining hope of saving the Crown Prince. The Crown Princess was terrified. If laryngotomy had been dangerous in the first place the chances were now that it would kill rather than cure. Perhaps this terror accounts in part for her violent reception of William on the sunlit steps at Villa Zirio on November 9th. For she says herself: 'William came with the intention of insisting on this terrible operation being performed and therefore brought Dr. Schmidt.' Prince William seems to have had no such intention.

"She was doubtless afraid that the house of cards on which she had set her life's hopes would now come tumbling down," was her eldest son's comment on that painful twilight scene in front of Villa Zirio.

The Crown Princess stood at the foot of the steps to receive her son, and the household waited on the steps behind her. The accounts of the Crown Princess and of her son on what followed are somewhat conflicting, but there were a number of spectators who all experienced much the same impressions.

Prince William approached his mother in a bustling and arrogant manner, and the two doctors, grasping their

menacing bags of instruments, came behind him. The Prince brushed with his lips the outstretched hand of his mother, looking to the spectators as if he meant to charge straight over her into the open hall door.

She asked him to come with her for a walk so that she could explain everything.

"It's impossible. I'm too busy. I must speak to the doctors," came the answer.

"The doctors have to report to me. Not to you."

"I have the Emperor's orders. I have got to insist upon the right thing being done and see that the doctors are not interfered with. I have to prepare a report for the Emperor about Papa."

"That is totally unnecessary. We always report to the Emperor ourselves."

"It is my duty to see that the Emperor's commands are carried out."

At this point it seemed that the Crown Princess was actually ready to put her body in the way of her son's passage up the steps.

"I shall go and tell your father how you are behaving. I shall ask him to forbid you the house," hissed the Crown Princess.

Further high words followed. The mother was doing most of the talking now in shrill and hysterical tones. "You cannot see your father! You cannot stay here! You had better go away!" she shouted at her son.

Presently, to use the words of William, there came 'a rustling at the top of the steps.' He looked up. Standing on the terrace, smiling down at him, was his father. The Prince thrust past his mother, ran up the steps between the dumbfounded members of the household, and father and son embraced.

The scene was at an end. The Crown Princess walked away without a word. William sent Radolinsky after her to make peace, which the Count was able to do. Shortly afterwards, William joined his mother, and they were seen to set off for a walk in deep discussion along the Monte Carlo

road. But the itinerary of their walk was ill-chosen. Within ten minutes they were being trailed by a party of international newspaper reporters who had watched them pass from the windows of the Hotel Victoria, which looked up to Villa Zirio from the opposite side of the Monte Carlo road.

The tragic and mysterious affair of the Crown Prince was now resounding through Europe. Newspapermen filled the Hotel Victoria, with telescopes trained from their bedroom windows on the fateful Villa upon the mountain-side. In spite of the reconciliation between mother and son, in spite of Prince William's official mission, there was no room for him at Villa Zirio. He would have to take a room at the Hotel Victoria. He was humiliated, but he did not protest any more. His mother could win the preliminary skirmish. He would win the battle. When William entered the hotel and seated himself in the lounge, mysterious foreigners peered round every door and peeped through the windows. They waited for him at the corners of the passages. 'Creatures of Mackenzie,' he contemptuously dubbed these busy newspapermen, for he was obsessed with the notion that large numbers of them were accepting money from the Englishman to give him a good write-up.

Next morning William walked up to Villa Zirio. He asked to see his father immediately and was taken to him. The object of his mission from the Emperor was explained. The Crown Prince submitted to an examination by all the doctors. When the examination was at an end Prince William summoned them to a consultation in the morning-room. Explaining that each of them must be ready to put his opinion to paper if called upon, he informed them that he was about to question them in order of seniority.

He turned first to Sir Morell Mackenzie. 'Not a little to my astonishment,' says William, 'he pronounced definitely that my father was suffering from cancer of the larynx. He would be dead in eighteen months.'

All the doctors were of the same opinion. They had decided that the laryngotomy had now small chance of

success. It ought only to be performed if the Crown Prince demanded this himself.

"How long," asked the Prince, "must the evil have been present to reach this high degree of development?"

"At least six months," came the reply.

Silence fell in the morning-room. 'I thought,' writes William, 'that Mackenzie would die of shame, but his face, which I was watching narrowly, showed no trace of emotion.'

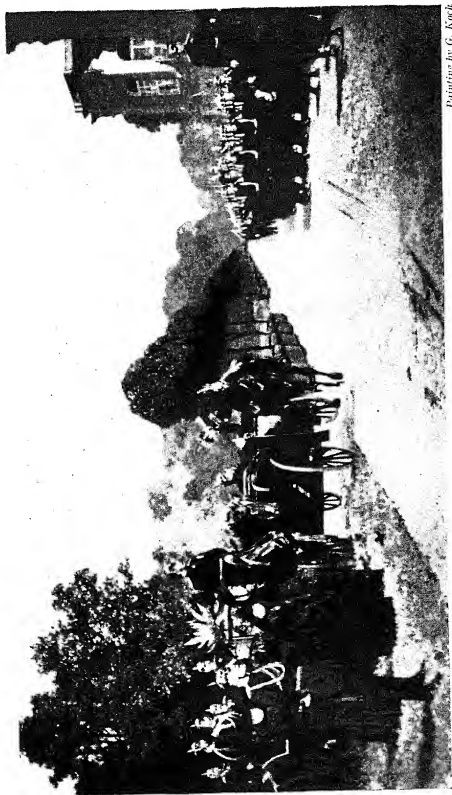
Prince William said that one among them must go to his father and inform him of their verdict. They selected Professor Schrotter for this terrible mission.

Schrotter found the Crown Prince and the Crown Princess together, unattended. Plainly, but with great gentleness, he told the Crown Prince the unanimous verdict. When the doctor began to speak the Crown Prince stood erect, like a prisoner receiving sentence at the bar. His shoulders were braced back in his old undress uniform jacket. He looked the doctor in the eyes. His face was expressionless. The Crown Princess pressed his arm. She, too, was a picture of calm courage—until she left Fritz. In the next room she completely broke down. It did, indeed, seem that the whole world had turned against her.

The Crown Prince asked for the doctors to be sent to him. "I must thank them for the trouble they have taken on my behalf," he said to Schrotter. When they came in he was gazing out at the orange trees in the garden with a far-away look. He turned to them and thanked them in a firm but hardly audible voice. Several of them began to weep.

The Crown Prince sent for his children. William and his three sisters entered. He smiled at them. 'It was he who was calm and cheerful, and set about comforting us,' says Princess Victoria. William had forgotten his differences with his father. He remembered the old days when he and his father had been close together.

'What a man!' he wrote that night. 'May God grant him but as little pain as possible in this frightful, unexampled end to his life! I would never have believed that tears are a relief, for I never knew tears before.'



Painting by G. Koch

EMPEROR FREDERICK REVIEWS HIS TROOPS AT CHARLOTTENBURG A FORTNIGHT BEFORE
HIS DEATH FROM CANCER

Crown Prince William sits his horse behind his father's carriage. Female figures: Empress Frederick and her daughters.



That night the Crown Prince also sat writing. He had signed a statement that he did not wish to undergo laryngotomy. Now he was making an entry in his diary. When the Crown Princess came to him she found him pausing over these words on the paper: 'And so I suppose I must set my house in order.'

William returned to Berlin. The country was working itself into a state of hysteria. Public business was at a standstill. The old Emperor had become incapable of fulfilling his office. The Crown Princess persisted in keeping the Crown Prince abroad. He, too, was slowly dying. It was often impossible for Bismarck to get the Royal signature to urgent documents.

Bismarck therefore suggested that the time had come to make Prince William Regent during the lifetime of the old Emperor. What might happen when the Emperor died he could not say. Perhaps, mercifully, the Crown Prince would be dead before him. Then Prince William would ascend the Throne and the regime of 'blood and iron' would continue, with Herbert Bismarck ready to take over the reins when his father decided to retire. In the meantime it would be a step in the right direction to have Prince William made Regent. It would be inadvisable to consult the Crown Prince before taking this step.

Such a move was entirely in keeping with Prince William's arrogant and impetuous outlook, as the Chancellor well knew. Bismarck went to the Emperor, found him in one of his lucid moods, and advised the drawing up of a Proclamation declaring Prince William Regent. The 'old Master' agreed to sign this, and it was accordingly drawn up at the Foreign Office. The Proclamation was published to the German Empire on November 17th. Prince William had now placed himself under the direction of Bismarck. Neither a copy of the Proclamation nor any official notification of what had taken place was sent to San Remo.

Since the Crown Prince had promised his wife never to read the newspapers, because the harrowing reports about his own condition and the vicious arguments deeply troubled

him, he did not learn of what had taken place until a letter came from William. William disclaims responsibility for this cruel shock, inflicted upon his father. It was his belief that official notification had been sent by the Chancellor. When he discovered that this was not the case, he went immediately to Bismarck. Bismarck promised that this should be done, and actually drew up the official letter to the Crown Prince in William's presence. However, for reasons known only to himself, the Chancellor chose not to send the letter nor any other one. Coming quite unexpectedly, William's letter seemed almost casual in its tone.

The effect upon the Crown Prince was terrible. His face suffused with scarlet. He closed his eyes. When he opened them the tears coursed down his cheeks and dripped from the blond beard. Fierce, burning tears of rage, then tears of broken-hearted feebleness. He looked up piteously at his wife.

"I am not yet an idiot or incapable!" he squeaked.

In December the Crown Princess allowed an occurrence at Villa Zirio which for sheer inanity and indiscretion transcends any of her previous doings. As usual, she had some justification for her action, and as usual it took the form of defying high places in the country of which she was a Princess. Bismarck has been vilified for his brutal and heartless attitude toward Empress Frederick when she was left a widow. The trick that the Crown Princess played upon him at this point may have seemed justified to the perpetrator, but the Chancellor and, for that matter, Prince William necessarily saw it in a very sinister light. This was open warfare with a vengeance. If Bismarck ever took himself to task for overestimating the dangerous possibilities in the *Englanderin* and her English relations, he never did so after piecing together the items of this intrigue.

It was a crude little drama, exceedingly clever in its way, and worthy of inclusion in any melodrama of espionage. It centred round the Franco-Prussian War diaries of the Crown Prince. When the three boxes of private letters had been taken to England at the time of the Jubilee, the Crown

Prince's war diary, which was in three volumes, was left behind. The Crown Princess now conceived the idea that if, at some future date, the diaries of her husband could be published to the world, these would constitute a decisive answer to many of the slanderous accusations with which she and the Crown Prince had been assailed. She knew that her husband had played a far more important part in bringing about the formation of the German Empire than had been credited to him, and she wanted the German nation also to know this. Bismarck, as might have been expected, had put himself before the nation as the maker of Germany. He had kept in the background the fact that he owed to the Crown Prince much of his success, and that it was largely the personal influence of the Crown Prince with the German rulers which had made the Empire possible.

Probably the Crown Princess talked about her project at Villa Zirio. Radolinsky was not the only spy of Bismarck's at San Remo. There were spies among the household servants. From one of these sources the Chancellor learned that the Crown Princess had persuaded her husband to publish the diaries. He did not know the contents of the diaries; but he did guess that these would lessen considerably his prestige with the German people, and he also believed that in all probability there would be passages which would reveal that he had acted in a high-handed manner towards the Crown Prince and Princess. The diaries, if published, were bound to act as good propaganda for the Crown Prince and his wife and as harmful propaganda against the policy for which he stood.

Bismarck determined that the diaries must not be published. The Chancellor, after a short chat with Prince William, who had come to his room at the Foreign Office, was able to sit back well satisfied that his young Prince was now of the opinion that the publication of the war diaries would be an unpatriotic gesture on the part of his father and mother, and that in the best interests of Germany this must be stopped.

It is uncertain just what the Chancellor intended to do at

this juncture ; but warning reached the Crown Princess that the diaries might be stolen from Villa Zirio. She advised Fritz to send them to England by some trusty agent, and he agreed. Once again the Crown Princess must have talked, for the next thing she learned was that there were spies both inside and outside at Villa Zirio, and that orders had been issued from Berlin that any members of the household at San Remo who left the Villa bound for England would be followed. Before or when he reached a port his luggage would be 'lost' or, if the diaries were hidden about his person, he might be subjected to personal violence. At all events, by hook or by crook the diaries were to be brought to the Foreign Office at Berlin.

The person whom the Crown Princess had selected to carry the diaries to England was Dr. Hovell, Morell Mackenzie's assistant. She had become very friendly with Hovell because he invariably sided with her point of view and had given her much sympathy in the harassing days through which she was passing. Knowing Bismarck, the Crown Princess was in no doubt that Hovell would never reach England with the diaries unless some ruse was adopted to baffle the spies.

The following plan was agreed upon. The Crown Princess took the three volumes and placed them on the big table in the centre of the drawing-room at Villa Zirio. She said that she believed that members of the household would be interested to look through them. The diaries lay on the table for three days. Then, on the evening of the third day, a telegram from London arrived for Dr. Hovell. An important patient of his wished to see him immediately.

Hovell told only his valet that he must leave very early on the following morning. The house was not stirring when he came downstairs. He crossed the drawing-room to reach the hall and, in doing so, swept the three diaries off the table under his coat. Then he made for the railway station.

An hour or so later the spies discovered that the diaries had vanished. A warning telegram hummed over the wires to Berlin. The Chancellor was all ready for just such an

alarm. Every conceivable port which an agent of the Crown Princess might use to reach England and most of the big railway junctions had their watchers. A few telegrams, and the diaries of the Crown Prince would never reach England!

Hovell reached the railway station. Instead of buying a ticket to a port, he booked to Berlin. Nobody was watching the Berlin route.

It was an hour or two after midnight on the following day when Sir Edward Malet, the British Ambassador, was awakened at the Embassy in Berlin. He was told that a mysterious Englishman wished to see him on a matter of urgency, and refused to leave. Lunatics sometimes trouble Embassies in this way, and Sir Edward was tempted to turn over and order the fellow to be flung out. When the man sent up a further message that he came from the Crown Princess, Sir Edward rose and came down in his dressing-gown.

Later in the morning an Embassy courier left Berlin for England with the Crown Prince's diaries in his bags. These were duly handed to Queen Victoria.

Three days afterwards, Bismarck learned that Dr. Hovell had reappeared at Villa Zirio, that he had not been to England, and that the diaries could not be located. The Chancellor soon ascertained that he had been tricked. He held the Crown Princess solely responsible. He regarded her action as an insult, not to himself, but to the German people.

This dramatic gesture on the part of the Crown Princess turned out to be a miscalculation. It was energy wasted and ill-will gained. For one of the first things to happen upon the death of Emperor Frederick was that William II, upon the advice of Bismarck, ordered his mother to have the diaries sent back from England on the grounds that they were the property of the German State. She had no choice but to obey her son.

With the coming of February the Crown Prince was breathing with difficulty. Examination showed that the

windpipe was almost entirely blocked by the growth. Nothing remained but to perform tracheotomy, by which a silver tube had to be inserted into the windpipe through the throat. The operation was performed successfully on February 9th.

In Berlin it was believed that the old Emperor was sinking. William I himself seemed to know that he was near the end. He often wept for the plight of his son in a foreign country. Now he sent for Prince William and instructed him to go to San Remo to arrange for the Crown Prince to be brought home at the earliest possible moment.

William arrived at San Remo. This time no sharp words passed between mother and son. He was left in no doubt, however, that so far as his mother was concerned his presence was considered unnecessary. The mother complained that the son treated her with callous coldness. The son used the same words of his mother.

'The aspect of my father was heartbreaking,' says William. 'The tall Siegfried figure showed in its emaciation and in the yellow colour of the face unmistakable signs of the rapid progress of the disease. He was perpetually tormented by a tearing cough, and no words passed his lips, for his mouth was already for ever dumb. Notes rapidly scribbled on bits of paper had to take the place when gesture and mimicry failed.'

Morell Mackenzie, he found, was still as much in favour as ever. He had now gone back completely on his verdict of November. Once more he was saying that he saw no certainty that the disease was cancer. The Crown Prince did not believe him. He felt that Mackenzie spoke only to buoy him up. The Crown Princess affected to believe this opinion and was beginning to put it about with pathetic earnestness. But such was the wasting demeanour of the Crown Prince that nobody else was able to express any hope for him at all.

There was warmth in the February sunshine and the Crown Prince spent his happiest hours sitting in the garden which, in that soft, southern clime, was already bright with flowers. Villa Zirio had become a centre of international

interest and often parties of well-meaning strangers, especially English people, used to drive out from Monte Carlo and stand looking up at the Villa. Sometimes they came to the door and asked that their sympathy should be conveyed to the Crown Prince. On such occasions he would come in from the garden and go to the balcony in front to greet them. One of the few happinesses left to him was to find that many good people had not forgotten him, and took the trouble to come out to his villa to express their feelings. In the end very large numbers of unknown visitors came to greet the dying Crown Prince on the balcony at Villa Zirio. He became very deeply moved.

March came to fill Berlin with howling winds and blinding, freezing snow blizzards. William had returned from Berlin without persuading his mother to bring the Crown Prince back to Berlin. The new doctrine of hope with which she was now surprising everyone made her nervous of risking the patient's health in the cold airs of Germany. William, shivering in a white and ice-bound Berlin, had to admit that for once his mother was right. Nothing but the ultimate emergency should bring the Crown Prince from the warm, southern sunshine into the hardest German winter of the century.

But the ultimate emergency was at hand. Time was drawing toward March 9th. The old Emperor, propped and wrapped with soldierly neatness, lay dying on the meagre frame of his old camp bed in his bleak dressing-room. Beside him Empress Augusta sat nodding endlessly in her bath-chair. Bismarck hovered spasmodically by the head, watching with hooded, vulturine eyes the gasping lips of the 'old Master.' The mind of the Chancellor was walking in the Future. Every move must be made with care. To-morrow the Crown Prince might be Emperor. A dying Emperor, of little account himself, but with an Empress whom they called the most brilliant and energetic woman on the Continent. What could she do in a brief spell of months? It could not be longer.

Prince William, too, was frequently at the bedside. The

old man would stare straight at his grandson. He mistook him for the Crown Prince. He talked to him of high politics, of Germany's relations with Russia, Austria, and Britain. He thought he was advising his successor. There was something ironic in this unconscious skipping of a reign.

But William scarcely heard the breathless tones of his grandfather, as he feebly meandered on, talking as he thought with the son whom he had starved of national service in the days when both had been in health. Inside the brain of William massed drums were crashing and trumpets brayed out a triumphant pæan. He could not keep himself from looking across two coffins bearing Royal palls—that of his grandfather and that of his father. Beyond, he watched the heroic figure of a white knight, radiant in his manhood, advancing to claim his Imperial Throne before a hushed people.

PART SIX

'I MUST STUMBLE ON MY WAY ALONE'

MARCH 9th, 1888. . . . Morning. . . . The breeze stirs the flowers in the garden behind Villa Zirio. The scent of orange blossom brings happiness to Crown Prince Frederick as he paces with drooping footsteps over the sunlit grass.

A footman comes from the house. He bears a telegram on a tray. The Crown Prince takes it languidly. One glance at the envelope. Then he turns deathly pale. He drops the envelope unopened on the tray. The frightened servant helps him to a garden seat. There he sits, dazed and perfectly still. His lips part as if to let out a moan, but no sound comes from him. Presently, he begins to weep.

He did not need to open the telegram to know its contents. It was addressed 'To His Imperial Majesty the Emperor Frederick William.' Through all those years of robust health he had waited for this. Now it had come, and he was no more than a living corpse.

Emperor Frederick takes his pad and pencil from his pocket. He writes with a quivering hand. The entire household is to be collected immediately in the great drawing-room. He will come to them. The footman hurries into the house.

It is a tense scene as they all wait in a semicircle in the great drawing-room—doctors, chamberlains, ladies-in-waiting, valets, footmen, grooms, chefs, and kitchen hands. In the middle of the semicircle a small table has been placed for the Emperor, and on it is a pad and pencil. Count Seckendorff, setting straight his hastily donned uniform,

stands beside it. At one side of the room waits the Empress with her three daughters.

Emperor Frederick enters and walks with a firm step to the table. He writes a message on the pad. It is an order to fetch his Order of the Black Eagle from his room. Seckendorff reads the message and sends for the Order. The Emperor writes again. It is his announcement of the death of his father and his accession to the Imperial Throne. He signs the announcement. Seckendorff reads the words to the household.

An eye-witness describes Frederick William at that moment. 'He had become handsome again, as in the radiant days of his youth. His beard, with a few silver streaks, glowed in the brilliant light. Tall and well-built, he dominated the entire company. His blue eyes were slightly misty. His delicate complexion, now heightened with a little colour, seemed to show the real tranquillity which had taken possession of his soul; and his mouth with the red lips had now that fascinating smile which characterized him.'

Emperor Frederick receives the Order of the Black Eagle from an attendant and crosses the room to the Empress. Bowing very low before her, he reverently kisses her hand. He tenderly places the Ribbon of the Black Eagle about her neck. His reward to a devoted wife.

The Emperor turns to Sir Morell Mackenzie and grips his hand. Then he signals to Count Seckendorff to bring him the writing-pad. He writes and hands the sheets to Morell Mackenzie.

'I thank you,' run the words, 'for having made me live long enough to recompense the valiant courage of my wife.'

The macabre twilight reign of ninety-nine days is under way.

Whatever the weather in Berlin, the dying Emperor must hurry to his capital.

Another telegram arrives. This time it is from William. He wishes to know under what *title* the troops were to take the oath to the new Emperor. At once the answer is wired to

Berlin—*Frederick IV.* Frederick William is dreaming his old dream of the Holy Roman Empire. Prince William brings the telegram to the Chancellor. "That is impossible," snaps Bismarck. "The new German Empire has no connection with the old!"

His eyes burning with anger, the Emperor reads a telegram demanding that he change his title. He gives way. He nominates himself Frederick William III. The Chancellor is satisfied.

Feverish preparations are under way at Villa Zirio. The corridors are full of open boxes and trunks. With a heart of lead the new Empress superintends the packing. The swift change from the warmth of the Riviera to the arctic blasts of Berlin may be the end of Fritz. But they must go *now*.

Early next morning they embark for Berlin on the special train, to achieve a speed record in Continental railway travel. They stop twice. Once to greet King Humbert of Italy, who has hurried from his capital to congratulate his old friend, and at the frontier where the Chancellor waits for the Emperor. There was a time when the two patriots of rival ideologies shied at too close proximity to one another. There was a time when the disdainful glance of the Crown Prince had warned Bismarck that when Frederick William ascended his Throne, he and Herbert might retire to their country estates. But those times are past. In the days to follow it will pay him to be outwardly, at least, on the best terms with the Emperor and the Empress.

Chancellor and Emperor embrace one another. Side by side they rush toward Berlin and the dumb Emperor scribbles notes while his wife looks over his shoulder and the Chancellor nods and smiles amiably. With the Empress, too, the Chancellor is soon on terms of the highest cordiality. Presently, he is going to exclaim sardonically to a friend: "I behaved to the Empress like an enamoured dotard!"

On the morning of the 11th they draw into Berlin. A lashing blizzard curtains the train windows as they fly

through the white city. William and Henry come forward from the shivering group on the platform. Father and son put arms about each other's neck. 'My father,' says William, 'embraced me with an indescribable expression in his eyes.' But mother and eldest son are cold and aloof. They drive out from the city along the snow-covered road to Charlottenburg Palace. Charlottenburg has been selected as home for the invalid by Prince William. Undoubtedly it is cleaner and fresher than the other Royal homes. In its great park it is isolated; an advantage not only to the sick man, but also to those who mean to rule his kingdom in Berlin. Dumb and with longing eyes, Emperor Frederick turns his head toward beloved New Palace as the carriage, running silently through the snow, sweeps him away to Charlottenburg.

The snow is not falling on March 16th, but the ice is thickening. Beneath a grey, frosty sky the wind whistles across the bleak, white wastes of the park and moans in the skeleton trees round Charlottenburg. It is the day of the funeral of the "old Emperor." The doctors have forbidden his son to risk himself out of doors in the inclement weather. The family are to attend the service in the Cathedral. They leave him pacing his room at Charlottenburg with distressed eyes.

The Empress and her daughters return from Berlin. They enter, but he does not turn to greet them. He is standing by the open window, muffled with cloaks and looking out across the Palace gardens to the park. They are taking the corpse of Emperor William I to the Royal Mausoleum.

At the first Crown Council nobody dares look at the Emperor as he assiduously scribbles his notes and hands them round the table. Finance Minister Scholz takes a new golden coin from a case. The coins minted with the new head, he says, will be ready in about two months. The others watch the Emperor anxiously. Everybody turns his gaze on the table. All understand the expression spreading over the Emperor's face and the gesture of hopelessness. He believes he will never see *his* money in circulation.

The Emperor and Empress drive in State through Berlin

on April 1st. From the packed kerbs the people throw bunches of violets—the Emperor's favourite flower—into the open carriage. Knee-deep in violets, they sit side by side, occupied with their own thoughts, since they cannot converse, and gazing earnestly into each other's eyes from time to time as the carriage turns into the drive to Charlottenburg. Afterwards, the Emperor remarks on his pad to Seckendorff: 'The people's flowers make me very happy. Also very sad. It is as if they were decorating my grave before I am buried.'

On several sunny days the people watch their dying Emperor pass through the capital, and each time, as he greets them with his sad, earnest eyes, the fragrant shower of violets rains into the carriage. A story is spreading among the poorer and less well-informed classes that the Emperor's drives are a sign that he is recovering.

But among the upper classes and officialdom a rumour of the most sinister character is making its way. From whence it springs is a mystery. This says that the Empress is reviving her husband with strong and dangerous stimulants before his public appearances; that he is left in a pitiable state of exhaustion as the effect of these wears off; that the Empress, driven by her ambition to rule, is doing this so that the Reich cannot be persuaded to authorize Crown Prince William to deputize for his incapable father.

No one can understand the Empress—neither her friends nor her enemies. She turns to Prince Hohenlohe. "It is perhaps possible," she says, "that the illness will be of long duration." Watching the emaciated Emperor, Hohenlohe goes away astounded.

What is the meaning of this campaign to persuade the world that the Emperor is capable of fulfilling his office? Ambition for herself and to serve the ends of England, say the only people who matter. She falls like a fury upon visitors who talk of the Emperor's tragic fate. There are some people—old enemies—who are realizing the true feelings of Victoria for them. Driven by grief, loneliness, self-pity,

long-repressed resentment, and natural pugnacity, she rises up in her new power. William is not wanted at Charlottenburg.

State affairs are growing chaotic with the Emperor shut away from everybody. Even Bismarck is worried as to how this will all end if the Emperor does not die soon. In the meanwhile, he continues to ply the Empress as 'the enamoured dotard.' That makes the situation as tolerable as possible. He has never before been on such terms with the *Engländerin*. She is a very beautiful woman still, and in a way he cannot forget her attraction. This aged vulture, who in his country home can play about like a twelve-year-old, is human enough also to pity her in his way.

William believes his mother has thwarted him in his rightful Regency. He knows she has left three boxes of documents, the property of the German State, in London. He knows how she tricked them over the diaries. He has heard that still more papers are going to London. His English mother is a traitor.

Astounding stories from Charlottenburg, or purporting to be from Charlottenburg, are circulating in the capital. Hohenlohe is going about whispering to his friends that, if all the things which reached his ears were true, he could 'suggest nothing but a Royal Commission to protect the Emperor from the Empress.' They are turning her into a beast at bay.

Cupidity is a new charge levelled against her. Sections of the public Press are determined to paint their Empress as a vicious and sinister woman. According to Wallenstein, the Empress is beginning to make 'exorbitant claims for her jointure.' She complains—justly enough as it seems—that the late Emperor had remembered her sons but not her daughters in his will. In fact, the old Emperor has left his private fortune under a 'Crown Treasury,' which many legal opinions hold to be a Trust, to administer it at discretion for the Family. The Trust does not see fit to recognize the Empress's daughters. She disputes the legality of the Trust and as Empress demands a new legal ruling. Much dispute

follows. It shows the Empress in an undignified light. In the end the new ruling favours her. The majority pronounce their opinion that 'Crown Treasury' entitles the legal heir to distribute the money as he pleases. Upon this the Emperor gives half to his wife, half to the children. He will have no use for it himself. Her triumph in a fairly won victory stirs the anger of her enemies.

There can be no Coronation. To preserve a resemblance of Royal state, the Empress orders the holding of the *Trauecour*—the Mourning Court, an ancient Prussian institution. Every high-born lady of Berlin attends in deepest mourning. The Empress stands alone in the scarlet and gold Weisshalle. Knowing what she does of the people around her, she may well betray defiance in her manner. It is generally put about that the Empress commands the *Trauecour* for her own glorification. Ambition will not let her forgo this one excuse for personal triumph, though her husband is dying agonizingly at Charlottenburg.

An eye-witness speaks of the Empress, 'wrapped in black from head to foot, her face hidden by a crêpe veil, while a long procession of women likewise veiled in crêpe filed past the Throne, their black gowns high in the neck and skirts banded with crêpe a quarter of a yard wide, while long folds of double crêpe fell upon the floor in guise of Court trains.'

Waldersee, who stands beside the Throne as the Empress takes her place, has his own unpleasant comment on that moment to retail to his friends. 'She tried to assume a regal bearing,' he tells them, if his diary is to be believed. 'She flung her head back, and took the two steps, but as it were at a leap. Despite the black veil, from my sidelong viewpoint I could get a good look at her face; and reading it, my impression was that she revelled in being the centre of attention.'

Queen Victoria reaches Berlin. It is April 24th. The sands of the twilight reign are running low. This time she is not the Countess of Balmoral, but the Queen of England. Darkness has fallen but, under the bright lights, the people give

her a surprisingly vociferous reception, considering what the sponsored Press have been saying about England. She has come to take farewell of her son-in-law and also, if possible, to settle the Battenberg affair on behalf of her daughter. The Battenberg argument has now grown into a major tussel between the Empress, Bismarck, and William. Bismarck has threatened to resign. The dying Emperor cannot allow that. He is realist enough to know that the strength of Bismarck is essential to the security of Germany in her unhappy dynastic predicament. Nobody could take his place.

The Queen is prepared for storms. A warning cipher has reached her from Lord Salisbury. 'I have received several private telegrams from Sir E. Malet showing that Prince Bismarck is in one of his raging moods about the proposed marriage. He shows temper against Your Majesty, and as at such times he is quite unscrupulous he will probably try to give currency to the statements which are designed to make Your Majesty personally responsible for any evil results of his own violent passions. He has a vast corrupt influence over the Press. The German Chancellor is reported by his son to be in a state of intense exasperation.'

Sir E. Malet continues to report 'a terrible storm, a regular blizzard on this subject in Berlin.' The Queen is boiling with indignation against William. Sir Frederick Ponsonby is ordered to tell Lord Salisbury 'about the outrageous conduct of Prince William, and of the terrible *cercle vicieux* which surrounds the unfortunate Emperor and Empress. . . . How Bismarck and still more William *can* play such a double game it is impossible for us honest English to understand. Thank God! we are English!'

But Queen Victoria has not lost her good sense in her anger against the Chancellor and her grandson and her feeling for Vicky. She can picture in what a headstrong way her daughter may be acting in Berlin. Before she arrives a telegram is brought to the Empress. 'Don't contemplate marriage without full consent of William,' urges the Queen.

'It would never do to contract a marriage he would not agree to.'

The Chancellor's 'intense exasperation' has faded by the time the Queen is installed at Charlottenburg—or, at least, he has decided that the attitude of *enamoured dotard*, which at first worked so beautifully with the Empress, may prove equally successful with her awful mother.

The Reich Chancellor requests in humble dignity a private audience with the Queen of England at Charlottenburg. Flattered, the Queen graciously prepares to receive the colossus of Europe. The Chancellor has begged only for a moment's conversation at a time convenient to Her Majesty. She will see him on her first morning at Charlottenburg.

Queen and Chancellor emerge from the interview on the most cordial terms. Perhaps they really have conceived that intense admiration for one another that spectators imagine. At bottom, there is much in common between these two. Perhaps they even secretly wonder what the two of them might have made of Europe as husband and wife. Henceforth, in public, Queen and Chancellor positively fawn one upon another.

At the great banquet in honour of the State visitor, the Queen of England and the Chancellor face one another. Repartee across the glittering table borders on the flirtatious. With the dessert, the Chancellor's eye falls upon a large bon-bon decorated with a miniature portrait of the Empress. He attracts the attention of the Queen. Then, with a beneficent smile, he detaches the picture, slowly unbuttons his coat and, spellbound, the diners watch him press it blissfully to his heart.

For the moment the Chancellor can afford to cherish his Empress. Since that morning the Battenberg marriage plan has been dead. Emerging from the interview with Bismarck, Queen Victoria has told her daughter that the Battenberg match is out of the question. The Empress, deserted by her mother, has at last surrendered.

Busch's comment on his master's dealings with the Queen is characteristic. 'Grandmama behaved quite sensibly at

Charlottenburg,' he remarks. 'She declared the attitude of the *Chief* in the Battenberg marriage scheme to be quite correct and urged her daughter to change her ways. Of course it was very nice of her not to forget her own country and to wish to benefit it where it was possible for her to do so, but she needed the attachment of the Germans, and should endeavour to secure it; and finally she brought about a reconciliation between Prince William and his mother.'

The noted reconciliation between William and his mother is of a very fleeting kind, as William's own words shall bear witness. The mutual attitude swiftly hardens. Mother blames son for cruel and unfilial conduct; son blames mother for her bitter and unnatural attitude. Both behave themselves in a way to justify the accusations of the other. Possibly the mother is most to blame, for she is always setting light to a new powder barrel. The son plays his part by justifying and avenging himself.

At Charlottenburg Queen Victoria sits for hours talking to Fritz. 'They seemed to understand one another,' says Princess Victoria, 'and their ideas on State affairs seemed to meet with mutual admiration.' On the afternoon of departure the Queen goes to say farewell to her son-in-law. Both know that they will never see one another again. Queen Victoria kneels beside the couch of the doomed Emperor and earnestly prays to God that the end may be averted. 'My father knew that he was dying and that no earthly power could save him,' writes Princess Victoria. 'That was the most pathetic moment of all my life.'

In May fashionable Berlin comes driving out to Charlottenburg. In the chapel of the Schloss Prince Henry is wedded to Princess Irene of Hesse-Darmstadt. Augusta is there in her bath-chair. The Emperor is there, standing erect in the splendour of his regimentals. During the blessing and the exchanging of rings, those beside him beg him to sit down. He stands swaying on his feet. The hiss of air jerking through his canula seems to fill the chapel with horrific waves of sound. Sickened and distressed, the guests blame the

Empress for the dying man's attendance. She has plied him with stimulants, dragged him from his couch, and forced him into his choking uniform! She has made her husband come in her mad desire to persuade the world that he is less ill than is actually the case! The belief of the guests that the Empress is responsible for this barbarity is further confirmed when, a few minutes after the service, they watched the Emperor being wheeled away, a crumpled and exhausted figure with a baggy old coat substituted for his military tunic. Yet there seems no reason to suppose that the Emperor's appearance at his son's wedding was not due solely to his own determination to be there.

Nothing that the Empress does can escape the critics now. The weather has improved. The doctors suggest that the Emperor would sleep better at nights in a marquee in the grounds. For some reason the marquee is ordered from England. 'So even German tents are not good enough for the Empress! She hates and despises us so much that she will not even trust our tentmakers,' say her enemies. 'Meanwhile, our Emperor can lie and gasp for air till his wife's English tent arrives.'

The doctors still quarrel round the Emperor. William is more convinced than ever of Mackenzie's sinister influence over part of the Berlin Press. Mackenzie is preparing his memorandum of the case to be published as a book in London. The German doctors compile their memorandum to be published in Berlin. Such is the venomous atmosphere in the physicians' room, adjoining the Royal sickroom, that the doctors go to the patient shaking with nervous excitement. Unconsciously they vent their feelings upon the helpless Emperor, handling him with rough fingers, stabbing the canula clumsily into his throat, leaving him convulsed with frightful tornadoes of coughing and choking from the profuse bleeding in his throat.

Besides the doctors there are others in the physicians' room who peep round the door of the sickroom and seem to have no business there at all. 'Unfortunately,' says William, 'the company of correspondents had followed from San

Remo and, under the protection of Mackenzie, had succeeded in pushing themselves into the physicians' room in the Palace. It was thanks to these gentlemen that not only was a shameful campaign of denunciation conducted against the German doctors, notably Bergmann, but that in a certain section of the Berlin Press, as well as in English and French newspapers, there began against me a campaign of calumny and vituperation. . . . Even on the day of my father's death, when his eyes had scarce been closed, I found in the death-chamber a Viennese journalist, introduced by Mackenzie. He went out faster than he came in.'

Several days in succession William is turned away at the doors of Charlottenburg. It is impossible for him to see his father. His mother is trying 'to erect an invisible wall' between his father and himself. 'I learned that spies were being posted who gave timely warning of my arrival, whereupon I was received either by my mother or greeted at the house door with the information that the Emperor was asleep and my mother had gone out for a walk.'

William relates how eventually, one day, he demands to see Schulze, the valet. The servant comes down.

"I wish to see my father, *now*," he raps at Schulze.

"Very well, you have given me a command," says the valet.

He takes the Crown Prince up the backstairs to the Royal sickroom. The Emperor, much puzzled at his son's entrance through the servants' door, receives him with joy. 'Then he gave me to understand that I ought to visit him more often,' writes William, 'and when I answered that I had already called several times, he was greatly astonished.'

William, on his second backstairs visit to his father, sees several strangers, obviously journalists, watching him curiously through the open door of the physicians' room. He slams the door and locks it. He demands to see the Gentlemen of the Household.

"Why are these journalists allowed in the physicians' room?"

White with anger, he waits for their answer. It comes,

with a shrug of the shoulders. "We are not in a position to get rid of the journalists protected by Mackenzie."

William, a youthful Brigade Commander, is to manoeuvre his Brigade, the Second Guards, near the Tegel ranges on May 29th. The Emperor receives a note from his son asking if he would like the Second Guards to march through the Park in the afternoon on their way to Berlin. He could take the salute near the Palace. With a sad smile, Emperor Frederick writes approval of William's suggestion. He knows this will be his first and last review as Germany's Supreme War-lord.

The favourite carriage waits at the door on the afternoon of the 29th. Upright, in full uniform, helmeted, the Emperor takes his place in the carriage. They take him to the end of the box-tree avenue of the broad garden façade. The Empress and his three daughters join him and wait by the Imperial carriage. As they wait there, their sombre black seems to strike a note of terrible prophecy in the brightness of the sunlit garden. The unrelieved mourning gowns are for the 'old Emperor.' They might be for the emaciated Emperor who sits in the carriage with soldierly stiffness. Perhaps he thinks this himself. In just seventeen days he will lie in state in his coffin with flowers on his breast.

With moist eyes he is watching a growing cloud of dust away down the avenue and listening to the crashing drums. The black laquered *Pickelhaubes* flash out of the dustcloud. The rigid dark blue column is swarming past. The Crown Prince has turned aside and sits his horse behind his father. The end of the column reaches the Imperial carriage.

With tears streaming down his cheeks, Emperor Frederick grasps convulsively his eldest son's hand. Then he fumbles for pad and pencil. 'Have been content and felt great joy,' says the note he hands to William.

From Tegel to Charlottenburg the Second Guards had sung and joked. From Charlottenburg to Berlin, having seen the Emperor's face, they march in deep silence; nor do they want the bands.

Three days afterwards Emperor Frederick, with his family,

leaves Charlottenburg for New Palace. For weeks, with pathetic urgency, the dying man has been asking for this move. What does it matter where he lives? His health no longer matters now. He will be dead in a few days and knows it. He could die happy at New Palace—the old home. All his treasured possessions are there, all the relics of his life from the very first days of his marriage with Victoria; and Vicky, reading the yearning light in her husband's eyes, consents at last with a breaking heart. For her it is an admission that the awful ending is near.

New Palace must be opened and William, now virtual Regent, must approve. Perhaps at this poignant moment mother and son might have drawn together. But where his mother is concerned corrosion has bitten deep into William's heart. It is even choking the measure of his grief at his father's fate. At the same time that William grieves for his father he reviles his mother for shutting him out, and plans how he will deal with her as soon as the Emperor is dead. A few days before the end Eulenberg, the bosom friend, is listening to the Crown Prince discussing the grim situation. Perhaps, says the Prince, he will never see his father alone again! His mother may not even trouble to warn him in time to be present at the last scenes.

Startled by the callous tones of Prince William, Eulenberg tells how he exclaimed: "But, surely, you must ask your father's blessing!"

"Oh, I have that, all right," says the Prince with sardonic laugh. "But my mother will never let me be alone with him!"

The son is pitiless against his mother. He refuses to see that the agony of loneliness and heartbreak which afflicts her accounts for much of her conduct. She may thwart him and Germany while her husband is Emperor, she may even smuggle papers to Windsor, though these are rightly her son's property the moment death takes place. He will know what to do the very instant his mother becomes Empress Dowager!

Emperor Frederick is to go to New Palace by water, since the roads are bad and thick with dust. The steam yacht *Alexandra* glides up the cool Havel and the sunlight plays on the rippling water. The last journey. The Emperor stands gazing out through the open windows of the white saloon with the Empress and his family beside him. Bereft of speech, he points out the beloved spots on the bank where he and his children have picnicked, walked, and bathed. Pfaueninsel isle comes abreast, a splash of vivid greenery splitting the water, with its shady trees and riot of wild flowers—his favourite place. He is weeping, and the Empress weeps beside him. He will never see these things again.

New Palace is reached. Emperor Frederick looks up at the old home before he crosses its threshold.

"From now on, I want this place to be called *Friedrichschon* in memory of myself," he tells them.

On the morning of June 14th the Emperor scribbles a note to his wife and daughters. He wants them to leave him and spend the day on Pfaueninsel for the sake of Sophie, the *birthday child*. With a smile he gives his last birthday present. He is quite happy now in his downstairs room, with the big bay windows standing open to the flower garden. They refuse to leave him.

That day the doctors find that the Emperor is unable to take nourishment. It is the end. That day, also, Bismarck comes to visit the Emperor. The Empress stands by her husband while the Chancellor talks. It seems that the Emperor is half in a coma, but when Bismarck has finished he stirs himself, takes the Chancellor's hand, places it in that of the Empress, and firmly clasps them together within his own. He trusts his old adversary to look after her. Unhappy choice. He overestimates the chivalric calibre of Bismarck.

Empress and Chancellor leave the sickroom. It almost seems as if Bismarck is waiting outside the closed door for the Empress to prove to him that she is unworthy of his guardianship. The Chancellor tells Alexander Hohenlohe

that the Empress immediately informed him that when all was over she wished to retire to some castle on the Rhine. The Chancellor must see that William granted her this. "It must be a house which I can pull down and build and arrange to my own taste, without consulting the Home Secretary!" Through these words the Chancellor could hear the Emperor fighting for breath beyond the door. He informs Hohenlohe that he replied with some disgust, "I can't go in for sentimental politics just now." A Bismarckian calumny this, against the Empress, perhaps. And yet those words 'pull down, build, and arrange,' have a characteristic ring which at any other time, at least, none would question.

That night the Empress and her daughter Victoria sit up in the room next to the sickroom. The Crown Prince has been summoned. He strides into the Palace with a party of uniformed officers whose presence nobody can understand, though the reason for their presence will soon become plain enough. Like himself, they must have beds for the night—in fact, until further notice. Some lack of gentleness is apparent in the Prince's manner. His sharp eyes flash about him. He might be a police inspector who has come to take over a case.

At six o'clock next morning the family are gathered round the bed of Emperor Frederick. Outside the wide-open windows the morning sun sparkles on the dew-drops which speckle the flowers. Butterflies flit from flower to flower. The fragrance from the garden pervades the room. The fierce breathing of the Emperor breaks the stillness, and that is growing softer. Propped high with pillows, he plays with the pencil on his paper. His fingers refuse to write. His fine blue eyes pass from one to another of his family. Suddenly the eyes gaze straight ahead. A butterfly flutters in and settles on the chest of the dead man.

The moment for action has arrived. Emperor William II is about to watch his own mother and his sisters besieged at his order. He slips from the death chamber. No more State papers will leave 'Friedrichschron' for England. The search

from cellar to attic must begin. An officer sitting mounted on the terrace gallops away across the Park at the signal. The order is broadcast: 'No one in the Palace, including the doctors, to carry on any correspondence with outside. If any doctor attempts to leave the Palace, he will be arrested.' Robert von Dohme recounts the amazing scene that follows. 'Divisions of training battalions approached the Palace at the double; round all the terraces was a regular system of guards with loaded guns. Suddenly the Hussars appeared at the trot; divisions established themselves at all the gates of the Park; the Palace was, in the military sense, hermetically sealed. . . . In the dead man's room . . . no ceremonial, no service . . . no thought of the religious aspect.'

No religious service, but an immediate post-mortem on his father's corpse is the order of the new Emperor. Deeply mortified, the widow pleads in horror with her son to abandon this indignity. He will not listen. A frenzied appeal to Dhona, the new Empress, has no success: She cannot influence her husband. William II means to publish the verdict of the post-mortem to the world. He knows it will show the German doctors right from the very first. His mother and Mackenzie will stand out in the worst light.

It may be guessed that William is not sole instigator in this ruthlessness against his mother. And worse persecution is to follow. Bismarck stands at the shoulder of the young Emperor. Now that the *Engländerin* is in the dust the great Prussian is happy to kick his enemy. Inflict a bruise on her for every hour of anxiety she has given him! In this terrible moment Empress Frederick calls to the Chancellor as her husband's chosen champion to come to her aid. 'The Chief' throws her crumpled letter with scorn into the waste-paper basket.

Robert von Dohme, a friend of the Empress, believes she may actually be cheated out of her inheritance, and that the deeds of her property may vanish. He rushes to warn Seckendorff. Seckendorff has luckily already seen that danger. He has hidden the documents. Had he waited for

von Dohme's warning it would have been too late. The Empress's papers have already been confiscated.

There shall be no public funeral for Emperor Frederick—no lying in State. But for the post-mortem report published in the newspapers, the public may go about saying the Emperor is still alive, and his son has seized power. The corpse is hurried into a uniform, placed in a coffin, and laid on trestles in the Chapel. There the Emperor lies while the building rings with the clatter of hammers and coarse voices as the workmen nail up the funeral hangings. Tools, nails, even bottles at times, rest upon the Imperial coffin.

The hasty funeral is a mockery and an insult. The Emperor is dead. Long live the Emperor! The callous, macabre scene on the burial day sickens Eulenberg, the bosom friend of the new sovereign.

"The troops were dignified, the clergy were laughing and chattering," he says. "Field-Marshal Blumenthal, with the Standard over his shoulder, reeling about talking—it was horrible."

At Osborne Queen Victoria reads a letter from her widowed daughter :

'On the 14th December, 1862, you found time and strength to write me a line in your overwhelming grief, and I, through agony, half distracted, yet must send you a few words! I cannot tell you what hours those were, and what images torture my mind, what impressions rend my heart. Oh! they will haunt me for ever! The wrench is too terrible—when two lives that are one are thus torn asunder, and I have to remain and remember how he went from me! Oh, the look of his dear eyes, the mournful expression when he closed them for ever. Oh! my husband, my darling, my Fritz! So good, so kind, so tender, brave, patient and noble, so cruelly tried. His mild, just rule was not to be. Forgive me if I write incoherent nonsense, but it is almost too much to bear! Thank God his kind heart does not suffer what mine does now!

How am I to bear it ? You did, and I will too. I tried to help him with might and main, to be useful to him, to save him all trouble, annoyance, and pain. I always said I was his watchdog ! Now all struggles are over ! I must stumble on my way alone !'

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EPILOGUE

"MOSES ON MOUNT PISGAH"

THE Dowager Empress Frederick of Germany, who was spending a long time in Athens, waiting for the birth of the baby which her daughter the Crown Princess was expecting, was very simple. There would be a quiet, comely woman plainly dressed in black sitting all the morning on a fallen block of column on the Acropolis, busy with her sketching. A semicircle of tourists and idlers stood round her, but she did not mind that, and if they knew anything about painting they would easily see that this lady was no ordinary amateur but an artist, as Lord Leighton once told me, to be judged by professional standards. So there she sat very busy, and they all stood round her, spitting and smoking, till her gentleman, Count Seckendorff, who had also been sketching, came and told Her Majesty that the fiacre was waiting. He stood bareheaded as he spoke to her, until she told him to be covered, and off they drove in a little jingling, one-horsed victoria.'

The writer of these words in *As We Were*, a book of reminiscences, was the late E. F. Benson, the famous son of Archbishop Benson of Canterbury. That is a tranquil picture of Dowager Empress Frederick after the storm. But young Benson, during this visit of his to the British Legation at Athens, in the early years of the nineties, depicts the Empress in another kind of scene. Were it not that the veracity of this distinguished novelist and biographer is beyond question, and did one not know the strange depths in Empress Frederick's character, it might well be thought that what follows exaggerates the truth.

'One morning, casually, she (the Empress) sent round

word to the Legation that she would like to lunch there, and though the occasion was quite informal, diplomatic etiquette seemed to demand that I should wear a frock-coat of which I had no specimen. The butler, a man of abundant presence, kindly lent me his, and as we went down to lunch, I suspected from the whispers and giggles that went on between the Minister and the Empress, that this sartorial secret was being divulged. And so it was, for as we sat at lunch she began to admire my frock coat ; she had never seen such a beautiful frock coat, and how well it fitted. . . . Directly afterwards Sir Edwin Egerton had to go to see the King, and I was left alone with her and had a glimpse, tragic and sudden and disconcerting, of the tumult that raged underneath that tranquil manner. She talked for a little about an uncle of mine, who had lived for many years in Germany. Then she was silent for a moment, and suddenly broke out : " But Willy is mad ! " Again she paused, then pointing an emphasizing finger at me : " I mean just what I say," she cried ; " it is literal ; Willy is mad."

No incident in the life of Empress Frederick more aptly demonstrates the uneven, uncontrollable nature of her character than does this bizarre outburst to a young stranger. The person of whom she was speaking was her own son. To a friend the remark would have been an unhappy one for a mother to make ; to a total stranger it must have suggested that the Dowager Empress herself bordered on the state she attributed to her son. Yet, perhaps, it may fairly be said that in recording these words, E. F. Benson has preserved Empress Frederick in a nutshell for posterity. Here is the perfect typification of the mind which makes chaos.

At the time when Empress Frederick spoke thus of William II she was generally supposed to be on better terms with her son than had been the case for many years.

While Bismarck had remained with the Emperor, cruel persecution and public insult had been her lot. The Bismarckian Press bayed to the moon against her. Her friends were forced to submit to having their houses searched by police

agents. The hunt for hidden papers continued to be a favourite pastime with the aged Chancellor and his Emperor. From the day just after her husband's funeral, when she was ordered out of New Palace, to the day when William II dismissed the aged Chancellor in 1890, the attitude of active hostility was practised against her. It is amazing that she did not lose her nerve and fly to England for refuge, as she had once threatened to do before the death of Emperor Frederick. Soon after the departure of Bismarck mother and son became outwardly reconciled, though to the end observers detected the suppressed coolness which really existed between them.

Empress Frederick bought for herself the beautiful estate of Kronberg on the pine-forested slopes near Homburg. The house she pulled down, and in its place built a magnificent mansion in the style of the early sixteenth century. She called the house 'Friedrichshof' in memory of her husband, and over the porch the visitor read the words 'Friderici memoriae.' While the house was building she lived in Homburg and daily she drove out to Kronberg to superintend the masons at work. Every stone had to be laid in exact accordance with her designs, and doubtless there were times when she much exasperated the patient workmen, but it seems that she became very popular with these men. She was always ready to take a tool and show them their own business.

In the meantime, more workmen were setting out the 'Friedrichshof' estate. Roads had to be made, areas of forest cut away, and gardens laid down. The men soon learned to do nothing without the approval of the Empress. Fair weather or foul, she spent the days walking, riding, or driving from place to place on her estate. Here was the first creation of her own on the grand scale that she had ever had the chance to make. She surpassed the efforts of Prince Albert. Perhaps, in a sense, she was never so happy in all her life as during the four years in which she brought 'Friedrichshof' into being. The result was one of the handsomest estates in Germany. The lovely grounds, rose

gardens, rock gardens, landscape gardens with ponds and trickling waters, smooth lawns, arbours, and wildernesses had no equal.

Perhaps, to some, the inside of 'Friedrichshof' had the air of a museum, but to the Empress the heterogeneous antiques collected from the junk shops of Europe, the cases of coins and medals, the statuary good and bad, the works of art, the copies of works of art, the massive replica of the altar-piece of Cologne Cathedral in her overflowing library, gave intense happiness. She used to say to her guests: "One loves one's own possessions. One strokes them with one's eyes."

Each morning at half-past ten Empress Frederick came into her library to study economics, art, theology, philosophy, history, literature, science, social hygiene, or European literature. The margins of her books grew thick with pithy pencilled comments of an arrogant *naïveté* only surpassed by the unsolicited State scribbles of her Imperial son. Yet, once again, in justice to the amazing brain of this woman, it must be stressed that she was no intellectual dilettante. She could satisfactorily have held a University chair of lectureship in most of these subjects.

The Empress was never idle. There were many ancient remains in the district. She started excavating in all directions and gave Germany many new historical relics. She tracked down secret passageways. She restored the local church. She played a leading part in local charities. In her manner she must have mellowed considerably, for there is no doubt that around Homburg she was genuinely beloved. She was frequently seen in England.

The wife of the French Ambassador in London recalls a conversation with Dowager Empress Frederick. Her husband had been recalled to Paris, and the Empress commiserated with her upon her misfortune at having to leave London, 'the great centre of the world.' The Ambassador, when the Empress had left her, had her comment to make upon Queen Victoria's German daughter. "Au fond," she exclaimed, "*notwithstanding all the years she has*

lived in Germany, the Empress is absolutely English still in heart."

The Bishop of Ripon tells of a characteristic act of Empress Frederick in 1895 when she had been staying as his guest at Ripon. The Empress was about to leave and was standing in the porch talking with the Bishop and his wife as they waited for the carriage to come round. The Bishop noticed that the departing guest, as she talked, was staring hard down the drive. Suddenly, she exclaimed: "How much I should like to paint this lovely view. I will!"

Empress Frederick called her maid. The luggage was opened and a paint box produced. A stool and easel were fetched, and the Empress sat herself down to paint the Cathedral standing among the trees and meadows. She had forgotten about her train. As it turned out, however, she reached the station in time to catch it; for she drew and painted with such remarkable speed that in a few minutes she was lifting from the easel a beautiful sketch which amazed her hosts.

So the years passed by and Empress Frederick grew more and more attached to 'Friedrichshof.' Less and less often she was seen outside the bounds of her cherished estate.

It was in 1898, when Empress Frederick was fifty-eight, still full-faced and with a good colour, still young-looking and full of energy, that she had a fall from her horse which three years later resulted in her death from cancer.

She was riding with a companion not far from 'Friedrichshof,' when her horse reared up. She was hurled backwards off the horse. Her head struck the ground, her habit was caught in the saddle, and the frightened horse dragged her for several yards. One hand was trodden upon and lacerated. She got to her feet when released and smiled.

"I've ridden for fifty years," she said, "so I suppose it's natural that I should have an accident sooner or later. I shall ride again to-morrow. One mustn't let oneself get frightened of a horse. I'm going home now to try and paint and write some letters if my hand will let me."

But she never recovered from the injury. Early in 1900

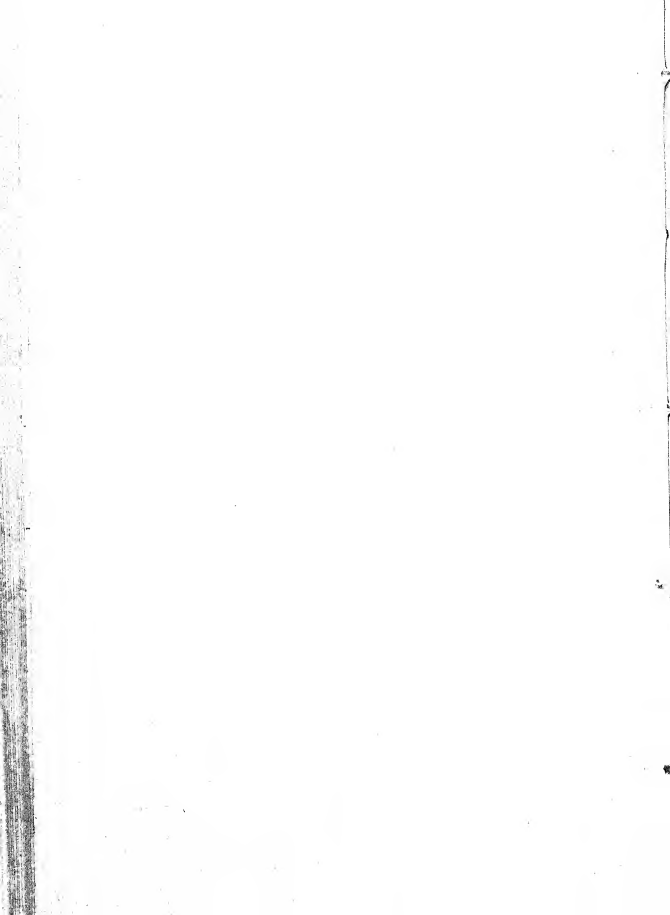
they told her that cancer had set in and that no cure was possible. She accepted the terrible verdict with the courage and tranquillity which equalled, if it did not surpass, that of her husband.

Unlike Fritz, she had to bear for many months spasms of acute agony. Unlike him also, she had nothing to live for and therefore the thought of death was less bitter. At least, she had only 'Friedrichshof' to live for. She was sorry to have to leave her estate. Many of the trees she had planted were hardly above the ground, and some of her flowering shrubs might never show any blossom while she was alive.

One sunny morning she was sitting in her bath-chair on the terrace and gazing across the gardens. She turned to Bishop Boyd-Carpenter, who was her guest.

"I feel like Moses on Mount Pisgah," she said, "looking at the land of promise which I must not enter!"

Empress Frederick died on the evening of August 5th, 1901. A new century was under way—an epoch of tragedy and horror for the world.



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